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AN  
ANALYTICAL ABRIDGMENT  
OF  
LOCKE'S ESSAY  
CONCERNING  
HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.



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1808.



## PREFACE.

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**THE ESSAY ON HUMAN UNDERSTANDING** forms part of that course of study which is appointed for students of the second year in Trinity College, Cambridge. This abstract of that celebrated work was made about twelve years since by an under-graduate of that society, solely with a view to his own improvement. Yet upon a re-perusal of the original, he cannot but think that the reasons which induced him to compose, may excuse him for publishing it.

In proportion to the intrinsic value of a work, it is to be regretted that it should lie under any disadvantages from its style or method : and it is hard to say whether an obscure brevity or a tedious prolixity tends more to discourage the reader ; for as the first requires amplification by commentary, the second requires condensation by analysis. But an author may obscure his thoughts as much by too diffuse as by too concise a style ; and if the subject is new or difficult, may not perceive that he sometimes labours rather to express himself than to impress the reader, and to

compensate for the feebleness by the frequency of his efforts: hence the reader is apt to become tired before the writer becomes intelligible.\*

Whoever reads the Essay with attention, will probably confess himself satiated with explanations and recapitulations, which for the most part are only repetitions in other terms. There seems indeed now to be but one opinion as to its merits and its faults; and perhaps no book is at the same time so much praised and so little read; for while the subject invites all,† the treatment of it repels most. On its first publication it laboured under the merits of the matter; it now labours under the faults of the style: it was then decried as novel and dangerous; it is now neglected as tedious and immethodical.

When the Editor began his task, he was not aware that the best apology for his undertaking was to be found in the Author's epistle to the reader; where, suitably to the modest title of his work, he tells us the occasion of his beginning and the manner of his prosecuting it:—that it was

\* Spon Sponi explique très-bien comment un auteur qui s'énonce très clairement pour lui-même est quelquefois obscur pour son lecteur: c'est, dit il, que l'auteur va de la pensée à l'expression, et que le lecteur va de l'expression à la pensée.  
*Maximes, &c. par Nicolas Chamfort.*

† See note 1, at the end of the Preface.

written upon no regular plan, but at intervals, as the ideas arose in his mind; and not with a view to support, but to discover and unfold a system.

To those who object that abridgments serve only to debase good books, and to make idle readers and superficial thinkers, by offering learning at too cheap a rate,—he would suggest, that it is not the purpose of an abridgment to supersede, but to recommend and promote the study of the original; and to enable the reader to comprehend the scope of a work, by compacting those thoughts which lye scattered and disjointed, and drawing forth those which lye hid in a thicket of words.

He might justify this opinion by the authority of many great names. Milton himself did not disdain to publish an epitome of Bucer's judgment on divorce: the profound disquisitions of Hartley have been adapted to popular use in the abridged edition of Priestley: and Gibbon thought it worth his pains to abridge for his own use the Commentaries of Blackstone.

That our author was well aware of the redundancy of his style, appears from his frequent mention of it in his letters to Molyneux; though he refused the labour of correcting it.

“ You will find by my epistle to the reader, that I was not insensible of the fault I committed by being too long upon some points, and the repeti-



tions that by my way of writing of it had got in, I let it pass with, but not without advice so to do. But now that my notions are got into the world, and have in some measure bustled through the opposition and difficulty they were like to meet with from the received opinion, and that prepossession which might hinder them from being understood upon a short proposal, I ask you whether it would not be better now to pare off, in a second edition, a great part of that which cannot but appear superfluous to an intelligent and attentive reader. If you are of that mind, I shall beg the favour of you to mark to me those passages which you would think fittest to be left out."

*Ed. fo. 1751. vol. 3. p. 481.*

"I am not fond of any thing in my book, because I have once thought or said it: and therefore I beg you, if you will give yourself the pains to look over my book again, with this design to oblige me, that you would use all manner of freedom, both as to matter, style, disposition, and every thing wherein, in your own thoughts, any thing appears to you fit in the least to be altered, omitted, explained, or added. I find none so fit, nor so fair judges as those whose minds the study of mathematics has opened and disentangled from the cheat of words,\* which has too great an influ-

\* Molyneux was both a good mathematician and a good

ence in all the other which go for sciences ; and, I think (were it not for the doubtful and fallacious use made of those signs) might be made much more sciences than they are." *p. 485.*

" I confess, I thought some of the explications in my book too long, though turned several ways, to make those abstract notions the easier sink into minds prejudiced in the ordinary way of education, and therefore I was of a mind to contract it. But finding you and some other friends of mine, whom I consulted in the case, of a contrary opinion, and that you judge the redundancy in it a pardonable fault, I shall take very little pains to reform it."

*p. 486.*

" Think it not a compliment that I desire you to make what alterations you think fit. One thing particularly you will oblige me and the world in, and that is, in paring off some of the superfluous repetitions, which I left in for the sake of illiterate men and the softer sex, not used to abstract notions and reasonings."

*p. 513.*

reasoner: but Condillac has observed (vol. vi. p. 225. in 12mo.) "*nous avons quatre métaphysiciens célèbres, Descartes, Malbranche, Leibnitz, et Locke; le dernier est le seul qui ne fut pas géometre, et de combien n'est il pas supérieur aux trois autres.*"

*See Kirwan's Logic, pref. p. 5.*

" I know too well the deficiency of my style, to think it deserves the commendations you give it. That which makes my writings tolerable, if any thing, is only this, that I never write for any thing but Truth, and never publish any thing to others, which I am not fully persuaded of myself, and do not think that I understand. So that I never have need of false colours to set off the weak parts of an Hypothesis, or of obscure expressions or the assistance of artificial jargon, to cover an error of my system or party. Where I am ignorant (for what is our knowledge !) I own it ; and though I am not proud of my errors, yet I am always ready and glad to be convinced of any of them. I think, there wants nothing but such a preference of Truth to Party-interest and Vain-glory, to make any body outdo me in what you seem so much to admire."

p. 524.

His friend Molyneux thought its prolixity tended only to illustrate the subject, and dissuaded him from making any alteration : but urged him to turn his Essay into a system of Logic and Metaphysics, accommodated to the usual forms ; because, says he, " it would be much more taking in the Universities, wherein youths do not satisfy themselves to have the breeding or business of the

place, unless they are engaged in something that bears the name and form of Logic."

*vol. 3. p. 483.*

To which Locke replies—"I like the method it is in better than that of the schools; where, I think, 'tis no small prejudice to knowledge, that Predicaments, Predicables, &c. being universally in all their systems, come to be looked on as necessary principles, or unquestionable parts of knowledge, just as they are set down there."

*p. 483.*

What Molyneux so much desired was soon after performed by a master of Arts,\* of Oxford; and with the very same design. He submitted it to the opinion and disposal of Locke, who in a letter to Molyneux expresses his approbation of it, and hopes it will satisfy him—adding "from the acquaintance I had of the temper of that place, I did not expect to have it get much footing there."

*p. 513.*

Molyneux was much pleased with the scheme; but not with the performance: "which (says he) though done justly enough, yet falls so short of that spirit which every where shews itself in the original, that nothing can be more different. To

\* Mr. Wynne, of Jesus College, afterwards Bp. of St. Asaph, published an abridgment of the Essay; London, 1696. 8vo.

one already versed in the Essay, the abridgment serves as a good remembrancer," &c.

*pp.* 514, 525.

The author has indeed copied too closely the very words of the Essay; and has rather selected particular paragraphs, than condensed the meaning of whole sections. He acknowledges, in his dedication to Locke, that he has omitted the first book, all that part of the 21st chap. of the second book which relates to the Will, and some useful hints and instructive theories. Now the opinions there maintained are of the highest importance, and are truly fundamental parts of Locke's system: they were at the time much discussed, and are particularly noticed by Locke in his letters as novel and unpopular.

It was proposed at a meeting of the heads of the houses of the University of Oxford, to censure and discourage the reading of the Essay concerning Human Understanding:\* and after various debates among themselves, it was concluded that each head of a house should endeavour to prevent its being read in his college, without coming to any public censure. On which proceeding Locke remarks in a letter to Anthony Collins—"I take what has been done as a recommendation of that

\* *La superstition a toujours une mauvaise logique.*

*La Philosophie de l'Histoire Sec. 34.*

book to the world, as you do; and I conclude, when you and I meet next, we shall be merry upon the subject. For this is certain, that because some men wink, or turn away their heads and will not see, others will not consent to have their eyes put out." *Locke's Letters. vol. 3. p. 737.*

And in a letter to Molyneux he remarks, that for some years it was hardly noticed at Cambridge; but that he began to think that it was a little more favourably received there, from two questions held the last commencement:—*Probabile est animam non semper cogitare*—and—*Idea Dei non est innata*. On the latter text Bentley expatiated in his sermons at Boyle's lectures, and Whiston in his new theory of the Earth.

*Locke's Letters. pp. 528, 530.*

The consent of two such men to his opinions might well console him for the opposition of Bp. Stillingfleet, whose only triumph was to have Locke for an antagonist. He could safely disregard all adversaries of less note, while his principles were supported by the mathematical accuracy of Molyneux and the metaphysical acuteness of Collins. He lived on terms of the strictest friendship with these distinguished philosophers, and had the highest respect for their judgment. A few months before his death he expressed his opi-

nion of most of his opponents, in a letter to Collins—" what you say about my Essay of Human Understanding, that nothing can be advanced against it, but upon the principle of Innate Ideas, is certainly so : and therefore all that do not argue against it from Innate Ideas, (in the sense I speak of Innate Ideas) though they make a noise against me, yet at last they so draw and twist their improper ways of speaking, which have the appearance and sound of contradiction to me, that at last they state the question so as to leave no contradiction in it to my essay : as you have observed in Mr. Lee, Mr. Lowde, and Mr. Norris, in his late treatise. It is reward enough for the writing my book, to have the approbation of one such a reasoner as you are. You have done me and my book a great honour, in having bestowed so much of your thoughts upon it. You have a comprehensive knowledge of it, and do not stick in the incidents ;\* which I find many people do ; which, whether true or false, make nothing to the main design of the Essay ; that lies in a little compass ; and yet, I hope, may be of great use to those who see and follow that plain and easy method of na-

\* It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be estimated, but by their general effects and ultimate result.

## PREFACE.

ture, to carry them the shortest and clearest way to knowledge: Pardon me this vanity: it was with a design of enquiring into the nature and powers of the understanding, that I writ it; and nothing but the hope that it might do some service to Truth and Knowledge could excuse the publishing of it." p. 741.

His hope was not vain: no work, since the Great Instauration of the Sciences by the immortal Bacon, has done more to banish frivolous learning and promote real knowledge; and such has been its reputation, that scarce a writer on Logic or Metaphysics has appeared since the time of Locke, who does not directly refer to his Essay, or pre-suppose an acquaintance with it.

By a patient and exact observation of the procedure of his own understanding, Locke has traced the progress of the Thinking principle in man; and in his investigation of the origin of Ideas, and the force of Terms, he has laid the foundation of all just Logic and Metaphysics.\* By substituting Definitions for Essences, he has abolished that scholastic jargon which puzzled the understanding with *entities* and *quiddities*, *substantial forms* and *occult qualities*. He has shewn that the great obstacles to the investigation and com-

\* See note 2 at the end of the Preface.



munication of Truth lye in the imperfections of Language and the abuse of Words :\* and thus establishing the importance of Grammar to Philosophy† he has taught us that the power of Reasoning extends itself with the art of Language. And lastly, in the application of his principles, he has directed us how to distinguish between Knowledge and Opinion, Certainty and Probability, Reason and Faith.

In the hope of extending the benefits of so excellent a work, the Editor ventures to offer to the student of Philosophy this Epitome ; in which he has endeavoured to give the spirit, without servile-

\* " Words are but the images of matter ; and except they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture."

*Bacon's Proficiency and Advancement of Learning* p. 50. 8vo.

"The truth of being and the truth of knowing are one ; differing no more than the direct beam and the beam reflected."

*Id.* p. 56.

John Locke and John Horne Tooke, after the example of Julius Cæsar, have laboured (to use the words of Ld. Bacon p. 105) " to make this same *vox ad placitum* to become *vox ad licitum*, and to reduce custom of speech to congruity of speech ; and took, as it were, the picture of words from the life of reason."

† Le Metaphysicien et le Grammairien mesurent des proportions correspondantes, l'un sur la pensée, l'autre sur sa peinture.

*Degerando, des Signes, &c. Pref.*

ly copying the words of the original, and to comprise every sentiment of his Author's, however inconsistent it might seem with the tenor of the work, or however absurd in itself. His purpose has been to retain all that a judicious reader would wish to remember; restricted however by the consideration that he was not to curtail, but merely to compress the matter of the original, without altering its arrangement.

Where any passage appeared too remarkable for thought or expression to suffer abridgment, he has marked its insertion by inverted commas.\*

Persuaded that the perception of Truth guides men to Virtue and to Happiness,† he disdains not the humblest effort to extend the authority of Locke, and spread the light of his Philosophy; though he is conscious, that from the execution of

\* Mr. Freret in his *œuvres Philosophiques*, p. 418, remarks that the famous argument of Pascal on a future Life has been set in its full light by Locke (B. 2. C. 21. Sec. 70.) Lest it should seem to be not sufficiently noticed in the abstract, at page 96, it is printed *verbatim* as an appendix at the end of the volume.

† "Certain it is that *veritas* and *bonitas* differ but as the seal and the print: for Truth prints Goodness; and they be the clouds of error which descend in the storms of passions and perturbations."

Bacon on Learning. p. 114.

his task, however happy, he can derive no credit but that of a zealous admiration of his archetype,—and of an earnest wish to compensate for his inability to augment the patrimony of Knowledge, by his industry to improve it.\*

\* *Bacon on Learning* p. 69.

(\* *Nota* 1. referred to in Pref. p. 2.)

\* The Editor cannot omit this opportunity of noticing the opinion of the most distinguished Philosopher of the age, who has given us the best criticism and commentary on Locke's Essay (see *the Diversions of Purley*, part 1. chap. 2.) and who never speaks of our author but in terms of the highest praise,—“Whom (says he) I reverence on this side of Idolatry (*pt.* 1. *p.* 201.) “Whose opinions in any matter are not slightly to be rejected, nor can they be modestly controverted without very strong arguments.” (*pt.* 1. *p.* 211.)

“Perhaps it was for mankind a lucky mistake (for it was a mistake) which Mr. Locke made, when he called his book an *Essay on Human Understanding*. For some part of the inestimable benefit of that book has, merely on account of its title, reached to many thousands more than, I fear, it would have done, had he called it (what it is merely) a *grammatical* essay, or a treatise on *Words*, or on *Language*. The human mind, or the human *Understanding*, appears to be a grand and noble theme; and all men, even the most insufficient, conceive that to be a proper object for their contemplation: whilst enquiries into the nature of *Language* (through which alone they can obtain any knowledge beyond the beasts) are fallen into such extreme disrepute and contempt, that even those who “neither have the accent of christian, pagan, or man,” nor can speak so many words together with as much propriety as Balaam's ass did, do yet imagine words to be infinitely beneath the concern of their exalted understanding.” *pt.* 1. *p.* 31.

Mr. Tooke's opinion of the *Essay* is in substance this—that it is the best guide to, and a philosophical account of, the *first sort of abbreviations* in *Language*, namely, that of *Terms*, which is by far the most important to *Knowledge*; and that it goes no further than to the *origin of Ideas* (the proper starting post of a grammarian, who is to treat of their

signs) and the *composition of Terms*, that is, the force of Words; for that whatever is said of Language, as distinct from Ideas, concerns only the *force* of words, and not the *manner* of their signification, to which the consideration of the mind only could never lead: that it would have made much difference in the Essay, if Mr. Locke had sooner been aware of the inseparable connexion between Words and Knowledge; and that among other things, he would not have talked of the *Composition of Ideas*, but would have seen that it was merely a contrivance of Language, and that the only composition was in the Terms; and that consequently it was as improper to speak of a *Complex Idea*, as it would be to call a constellation a complex star; and that *terms* only, not *ideas*, are *general* and *abstract*.

See part 1. chap. 1, p. 29—the whole of chap. 2,—chap. 4. p. 52. see also chap. 3. p. 50, 51.

(† Note 2 referred to in Pref. p. 11.)

*Metaphysics* has been so much abused both as a *term* and a *science*, that it may be useful, and not irrelevant, to take this occasion of explaining the meaning of the Term, in order to recommend the Science. It has received too the hardest usage from a quarter whence it was least to be expected—from that eminent Philosopher who has himself made the most important philological discovery in modern times, by the aid of *Metaphysics*.

“The very term *Metaphysic* (says he) being nonsense; and all the systems of it, and controversies concerning it, that are or have been in the world, being founded on the grossest ignorance of words and of the nature of Speech.”

*Divisions of Purley, Part 1. Chap. 9. p. 399.*

Yet he has himself used it as a term of great force,—has explained its meaning,—and has given in his own works the highest example of the value of the Science: for he confesses that his notions of Language were formed, before he

could account etymologically for any of the words in question, or was in the least acquainted with the opinions of others, or knew even the character of the language from which his proofs were to be drawn:—"it was *general reasoning à priori* that led me to the particular instances; not particular instances to the general reasoning."

*Chap. 7. p. 122, 130.*

And he observes again that the misapprehension of the nature and use of abstract terms has caused a false morality and an obscure (*because mistaken*) metaphysic, which Etymology alone can dissipate.

*Part 2. Chap. 2. p. 18. Chap. 6. p. 458.*

"But the importance rises higher, when we reflect upon the application of words to Metaphysics, and when I say Metaphysics, you will be pleased to remember that all *general reasoning*, all Politics, Law, Morality and Divinity, are merely Metaphysic."

*Chap. 4. p. 121.*

The great legislator in Science, Lord Bacon, who was as eloquent to interpret as he was sagacious to investigate Nature, thus defines it.—

Natural Science or Theory is divided into Physic and Metaphysic: Physic contemplates what is inherent in matter, and therefore transitory; Metaphysic what is abstracted and fixed.

Physic handles that which supposeth in nature only a being and moving; Metaphysic that which supposeth farther in nature a reason, understanding, and platform.

Physic enquireth and handleth the material and efficient causes; Metaphysic the formal and final causes.

Natural History describes the variety of things—Physic the causes, but variable or respective causes,—and Metaphysic the fixed and constant causes\*

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\* See the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning: p. 185, 188, 189, and p. 194-5-6. See. for T. Payne, *Fall Mall*, 1808—a small volume, but saturated with wisdom.

Mr. Harris, in a note on the second of his Three Treatises, 4th ed. 8vo. p. 365. agrees in the main with Ld. Bacon: but considers Metaphysic as synonymous with the first Philosophy.

"By the most excellent Science is meant the Science of causes, and above all others, of Causes efficient and final, as these necessarily imply pervading reason, and superintending wisdom. This Science, as men were naturally led to it from the contemplation of Effects, which effects were the tribe of Beings natural or physical, was, from being thus subsequent to these physical enquiries, called *Metaphysical*; but with a view to itself and the transcendent eminence of its object, was more properly called ἡ πρώτη φιλοσοφία, the first philosophy."—And in his philosophical arrangements, p. 409, he observes—"Metaphysics are properly conversant about primary and internal causes," &c.—and that is called *Metaphysical*, which though truly prior in itself, is "subsequent in man's contemplation, whose road of Science is naturally upward, that is from Effect to Cause, from Sensible to Intelligible."

Lord Bacon distinguishes between Metaphysics and The first Philosophy, considering this as "the main and common way, before we come where the ways part and divide themselves."

p. 174.

The meaning of this Original or Universal Philosophy, he then explains by negative—"That it be a receptacle for all such profitable observations and axioms as fall not within the compass of any of the special parts of Philosophy or Sciences, but are more common and of a higher stage."

p. 176.

And again he directly describes it as "the parent or common ancestor to all knowledge," and assigns to it "the common principles and axioms which are promiscuous and indifferent to several sciences:" &c.

p. 187.

In the Encyclopedia Britannica Metaphysic is defined "the

Science of the principles and causes of all things existent"—and thus explained at large :—hence *mind* or *intelligence* is the principal subject of this Science : hence the Science receives its name. Aristotle calls this the *first Philosophy* ; as not only superior, but prior in the order of nature, to the whole circle of the other Arts and Sciences. As Aristotle calls the philosophy of the body *Physics*, some of his interpreters call that of mind, *Metaphysics*, meaning not only that the subject is more sublime and difficult, but that the study is most properly entered upon after that of *Physics*. And Aristotle, to those books in which he pretends to elevate the mind above things corporeal to the contemplation of God and things Spiritual, prefixed the words τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά ; (thus interpreted by Du Val in his Synopsis) *cujus inscriptionis hæc ratio est, quod in hoc opere ea tractantur, quorum theoria posterior est doctrinæ naturali, saltem quoad nos, qui a corporum cognitione rerumque caducarum in substantiarum immaterialium atque immortalium contemplationem provehimur.*

Body and Mind, with their properties, adjuncts and powers, comprehend the whole subject of the Science of *Metaphysics*.



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**TRUTH** scarce ever yet carried it by vote any where at its first appearance: new Opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed without any other reason, but because they are not already common. But Truth, like gold, is not the less so for being newly brought out of the mine. 'Tis trial and examination must give it price, and not any antique fashion: and though it be not yet current by the public stamp, yet it may, for all that, be as old as nature, and is certainly not the less genuine.

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

## EPISTLE TO THE READER.

HE is little acquainted with the subject of this treatise, the *Understanding*, who does not know, that as it is the most elevated faculty of the soul, so it is employed with a greater and more constant delight than any of the other. Its searches after Truth are a sort of hawking and hunting, wherein the very pursuit makes a great part of the pleasure. Every step the mind takes in its progress towards knowledge makes some discovery, which is not only new, but the best too, for the time at least. For the *Understanding*, like the eye, judging of objects only by its own sight, cannot but be pleased with what it discovers, having less regret for what has escaped it, because it is unknown. Thus he who has raised himself above the alms-basket, and, not content to live lazily on scraps of begged opinions, sets his own thoughts on work to find and follow Truth, will, whatever he lights on, not miss the hunter's satisfaction; every moment of this pursuit will reward his pains with some delight, and he will have reason to think his time not ill spent, even when he cannot much boast of any great acquisition.

This book was not meant for those that had al-

ready mastered this subject, and made a thorough acquaintance with their own understanding; but for my own information, and the satisfaction of a few friends, who acknowledged themselves not to have sufficiently considered it. A conversation with five or six friends at my chamber, on a subject remote from this, gave rise to this Essay. Being much perplexed with difficulties that rose on every side, it came into my thoughts that it was necessary previously to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our Understandings were or were not fitted to deal with. And this discourse, thus begun by chance, was continued by intreaty, written by incoherent parcels, resumed at pleasure after long intervals of neglect, and at last arranged in the leisure of retirement.

This discontinued way of writing may have occasioned, besides others, two contrary faults—*brevity* and *prolixity*. Where I may seem to have said too little, I shall be glad to have excited a desire for more: where too much, I acknowledge that the way in which it was written is apt to cause repetitions: but I am now too lazy or too busy to make it shorter.—

I might alledge in my defence, that the same notion, having different respects, may be convenient or necessary to prove or illustrate several parts of the same discourse: but I frankly avow that I have ex-

pressed the same argument different ways, with the design of rendering plain and familiar some Truths which established prejudice, or the abstractness of Ideas themselves, might render difficult. I had much rather the speculative and quick sighted should complain of my being in some parts tedious, than that any one not accustomed to abstract speculations, or prepossessed with different notions, should mistake or not comprehend my meaning.—

“ I shall always have the satisfaction to have aimed sincerely at truth and usefulness, though in one of the meanest ways. The commonwealth of learning is not at this time without master-builders, whose mighty designs, in advancing the sciences, will leave lasting monuments to the admiration of posterity but every one must not hope to be a Boyle or a Sydenham; and in an age that produces such masters as the great Huygenius, and the incomparable Mr. Newton, with some other of that strain, it is ambition enough to be employed as an Under-labourer in clearing ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge; which certainly had been very much more advanced in the world, if the endeavours of ingenious and industrious men had not been much cumbered with the learned but frivolous use of uncouth, affected, or unintelligible terms, introduced into the sciences, and there made an art of, to that degree, that philosophy

which is nothing but the true knowledge of things, was thought unfit or incapable to be brought into well-bred company and polite conversation. Vague and insignificant forms of speech, and abuse of language, have so long passed for mysteries of sciences, and hard or misapplied words, with little or no meaning, have by prescription such a right to be mistaken for deep learning, and height of speculation, that it will not be easy to persuade either those who speak, or those who hear them, that they are but the covers of ignorance, and hindrance of true knowledge. To break in upon the sanctuary of Vanity and Ignorance will be, I suppose, some service to human understanding: though so few are apt to think they deceive or are deceived in the use of words; or that the language of the sect they are of has any faults in it, which ought to be examined or corrected; that I hope I shall be pardoned, if I have in the third book dwelt long on this subject, and endeavoured to make it so plain, that neither the inveterateness of the mischief, nor the prevalency of the fashion, shall be any excuse for those, who will not take care about the meaning of their own words, and will not suffer the significancy of their expressions to be enquired into.



# OF HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

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## BOOK I.

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### CHAP. I.

#### *Introduction.*

**SINCE** it is the Understanding that sets man above the rest of Sensible Beings, and gives him all the advantage and dominion which he has over them, it is certainly a subject, even for its nobleness, worth our labour to enquire into.

The Understanding, like the eye, whilst it makes us see and perceive all other things, takes no notice of itself: and it requires art and pains to set it at a distance, and make it its own object.

My design is to enquire into the *original, certainty, and extent* of human knowledge; together with the grounds and degrees of Belief, Opinion, and Assent.

I shall not at present meddle with the *Physical Consideration* of the mind; or examine wherein it

*essence* consists, or by what motions of our spirits, or alteration of our bodies, we come to have any Sensation by our Organs, or any Ideas in our Understandings; or whether those Ideas do in their formation depend on matter or not. My purpose is to consider the *discerning faculties* of a man, as they are employed about the objects which they have to do with.

He that shall observe with what fondness men embrace, and with what eagerness they maintain opposite opinions, may have reason to suspect either, that there is no such thing as Truth at all, or that mankind hath no sufficient means to attain a certain knowledge of it.

It is therefore worth while to search out the *bounds* between Opinion and Knowledge, and examine by what *measures*, in things whereof we have no certain knowledge, we ought to regulate our Assent and moderate our Persuasions. Wherefore I shall enquire,—

1st, Into the Original of those Ideas, or Notions, which a man observes and is conscious that he has in his mind; and how the Understanding is furnished with them.

2dly, What knowledge the Understanding hath by those Ideas; and the Certainty, Evidence, and Extent of it.

3dly, Into the nature and grounds of Faith or Opinion; that is, of that Assent which we give to propositions of whose truth we have no certain knowledge: and here we shall examine the *reasons* and *degrees* of Assent.

If we can find out how far the understanding can extend its view, how far it has faculties to attain certainty; and in what cases it can only judge and guess, we may learn to content ourselves with what is attainable by us in this state.—We shall then use our Understandings right, when we entertain all objects in that way and proportion that they are suited to our faculties, and upon those grounds they are capable of being proposed to us; and not peremptorily or intemperately require demonstration and demand certainty, where Probability only is to be had, which is sufficient to govern all our Concernments.

Our business here is not to know all things, but those which concern our Conduct. If we can find out those measures, whereby a Rational Creature, put in that state in which Man is in this world, may and ought to govern his opinions and actions depending thereon, we need not be troubled that some other things escape our knowledge.

The term *Idea* is that which I think serves best to stand for whatsoever is the object of the Understand

ing, when a man thinks: I have used it to express whatever is meant by *phantasm*, *notion*, *species*, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking.

I take for granted the existence of Ideas in all men's minds.

## CHAP. II.

## THERE ARE NO INNATE SPECULATIVE PRINCIPLES.

**SOME** think that the soul receives in its first being, and brings into the world with it, certain *innate principles, primary notions, or impressed characters*. This will appear to be false, if we can shew how men, barely by the use of their natural faculties, may attain all their knowledge, without any such original notions.

It would be impertinent to suppose the ideas of *colours* innate in a creature indued with a power to receive them by the eyes from external objects; or to attribute certain *Truths* to innate characters, when we have faculties to attain certain knowledge of them. Certain principles are supposed to be *universally assented to*; and therefore to be constant impressions, brought into the world with us as necessarily as our inherent Faculties. Yet this Consent, if true, does not prove them innate, if any other way of coming to such universal agreement can be shewn: but as there are none to which universal assent is given, this argument proves that there are no principles innate.

Children and Ideots have not the least apprehension or thought of the propositions,—“ *Whatever is, is*”—*It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be*—but, if these notions are imprinted, they must be perceived, and known to them; else Impression is nothing: for if any proposition can be said to be in the mind, which it never knew or was conscious of then all propositions which are true, and which the mind is capable of knowing, may be said to be imprinted: so that if the *Capacity of Knowing* be the natural Impression contended for, all the Truths a man ever comes to know are Innate. If Truths can be imprinted on the Understanding without being perceived, there is no difference, in respect of their original, between any truths the mind is capable of knowing; they must all be Innate or all Adventitious.

It is said that all men assent to them, *when they come to the use of Reason*:—though Reason is nothing else but the faculty of deducing unknown truths from principles already known. We may as well think the use of Reason necessary to make our eyes discover visible objects, as to make the Understanding see what is originally engraven in it, and cannot be there before it is perceived. The coming to the use of Reason cannot be the *time* of their discovery, because it is evident that these maxims are not in the mind so early as the use of Reason. Children use their Reason long before they have any knowledge of

the maxim—" *It is impossible for the same thing be and not to be.*"—Coming to the use of Reason is necessary before men get the knowledge of general Truths, but is not the time of their discovery and if it were, does it follow that a notion is originally imprinted, because it is first observed and presented to, when a faculty of the mind, which is quite a distinct province, begins to exert itself? Coming to the use of Speech would be as good a proof that they were innate. The true meaning of the proposition is, that Children commonly get not the general abstract ideas, nor learn the names that stand for them, till having exercised their Reason about familiar and more particular ideas, they are acknowledged capable of Rational Conversation.

The senses at first let in particular Ideas, and furnish the yet empty Cabinet: and the mind by degrees growing familiar with some of them, they are lodged in the memory, and names got to them. Afterwards the mind abstracts them, and learns the use of *general names*.

Our knowledge is first about those Ideas which are imprinted by external things, which make the earliest and most frequent impressions on the senses of infants. The mind discovers that some agree, others differ, probably as soon as it has any use of Memory, as soon as it is able to retain distinct Ideas: certainly, it does so long before it has the use

words, or comes to what we commonly call the use of Reason. A child, before it can speak, knows the difference between the ideas of *sweet* and *bitter* (i. e. *that sweet is not bitter*) as it knows afterwards, when it comes to speak, that *wormwood* and *sugar-plumbs* are not the same thing. A child knows not that 3 and 4 are equal to 7, till he is able to count seven, and has got the name and idea of *equality*: but he knows this as soon as he has settled in his mind the clear and distinct Ideas that these names stand for; and he knows it by the same means as he knew before that a *rod* and a *cherry* are not the same thing, and as he may know afterwards, that *it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be*. A man knows that 18 and 19 are equal to 37, by the same self-evidence as he knows 1 and 2 to be equal to 3: yet a child knows it not so soon; not for want of the use of Reason, but because the ideas those words stand for are not so soon got as those of one, two, and three.

All the sciences afford propositions that are assented to as soon as understood—*that two bodies cannot be in the same place* is a truth as readily admitted as that *a square is not a circle*—and 'as many distinct Ideas as we have, so many of these propositions can we make: but the *propositions* can not be innate, unless the *ideas* be innate; though they may be *self-evident*, upon understanding the



terms; else every well-grounded observation drawn from particulars into a general rule, must be innate: whereas only observing men draw these general propositions from particular instances, to which the unobserving cannot refuse their assent.

Nothing is a Truth in the mind, that it has never thought on: whence, if there are any innate truths, they must be the first of any thought on; and should appear most clearly in those persons in whom we find no traces of them: for *children, ideots, savages,* and *illiterate people*, being least corrupted by Custom or borrowed opinions, these innate notions should lie fairly open to our view, as the thoughts of Children really do. But these abstract maxims and reputed principles of science are the language and business of the schools of learned nations, accustomed to that sort of conversation where disputes are frequent; being suited to artificial argumentation, and useful for conviction; but not much conducing to the discovery of Truth or advancement of Knowledge.

## CHAP. III.

## THERE ARE NO INNATE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES.

*MORAL principles* have still less title to be considered as native impressions: the speculative maxims before mentioned carry their own evidence with them; but moral rules require reasoning and discourse, and some exercise of the mind to discover the certainty of their truth. They are less *evident* but not less *true*; and being capable of demonstration, it is our own fault, if we come not to a certain knowledge of them. The ignorance of them in many, and the slow assent to them in others, proves that they are nor innate.

When Thieves keep the rules of faith and justice with one-another, they do not receive them as innate laws of nature, but practise them as rules of convenience, without which they cannot hold together: but will any one say that those who live by fraud and rapine have innate principles of Truth and Justice, which they assent to? You may say—"their minds assent to what their practice contradicts"—but practical principles derived from Nature must produce conformity of action, or else they are in vain distinguished from Speculative maxims.

“ Nature, I confess, has put into man a *desire of Happiness*, and an *aversion to Misery*: these indeed are innate practical principles, which (as practical principles ought) do continue constantly to operate and influence all our actions without ceasing: these may be observed in all persons and all ages, steady and universal; but these are *inclinations of the appetite to good*, not *impressions of truth on the understanding*. I deny not that there are *natural tendencies* imprinted on the minds of men; and that from the very first instances of sense and perception, there are some things that are grateful, and others unwelcome to them; some things that they incline to, and others that they fly: but this makes nothing for *innate characters* on the mind, which are to be the principles of knowledge, regulating our practice. Such natural impressions on the understanding are so far from being confirmed hereby, that this is an argument against them; since if there were certain characters, imprinted by nature on the understanding, as the principles of knowledge, we could not but perceive them constantly operate in us, and influence our knowledge, as we do those others on the will and appetite; which never cease to be the constant springs and motives of all our actions, to which we perpetually feel them strongly impelling us.”

Again, there cannot be any one moral rule proposed, of which a man may not justly demand a reason:

whereas, if it were innate or self-evident, it could not need any proof to ascertain its truth. You cannot without absurdity ask a reason *why it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be*, as you may of that most unshaken rule of morality, and foundation of all social virtue, *that one should do as he would be done unto*: the truth of all moral rules plainly depending upon some other antecedent to them, and from which they must be deduced:

“That men should keep their compacts, is certainly a great undeniable rule in morality. But yet, if a Christian, who has the view of happiness and misery in another life, be asked why a man must keep his word, he will give this as a reason: because God, who has the power of eternal life and death, requires it of us. But if an *Hobbist* be asked why, he will answer, because the public requires it, and the *Leviathan* will punish you if you do not. And if one of the old *Heathen* philosophers had been asked, he would have answered, because it was dishonest, below the dignity of a man, and opposite to virtue, the highest perfection of human nature, to do otherwise.

“Hence naturally flows the great variety of opinions concerning the moral rules, which are to be found among men, according to the different sorts of happiness they have a prospect of, or propose to themselves: which could not be if practical prin-

ciples were innate, and imprinted in our minds immediately by the hand of God. I grant the existence of God is so many ways manifest, and the obedience we owe him so congruous to the light of reason, that a great part of mankind give testimony the law of nature ; but yet I think it must be allowed, that several moral rules may receive from mankind a very general approbation, without either knowing or admitting the true ground of morality which can only be the will and law of a God, who sees men in the dark, has in his hand rewards and punishments, and power enough to call to account the proudest offender. For God having, by an inseparable connexion, joined *virtue* and *publick happiness* together ; and made the practice thereof necessary to the preservation of society, and visibly beneficial to all with whom the virtuous man has to do it is no wonder, that every one should, not only allow, but recommend, and magnify those rules to others, from whose observance of them, he is sure to reap advantage to himself. He may, out of interest, as well as conviction, cry up that for sacred which if once trampled on, and profaned, he himself cannot be safe nor secure. This, though it takes nothing from the moral and eternal obligation which these rules evidently have ; yet it shews that the outward acknowledgment men pay them in their words proves not that they are innate principles: nay,

proves not so much, that men assent to them inwardly in their own minds, as the inviolable rules of their own practice ; since we find that self-interest and the conveniences of this life make many men own an outward profession and approbation of them, whose actions sufficiently prove, that they very little consider the lawgiver that prescribed these rules, nor the hell he has ordered for the punishment of those that transgress them."

*Conscience* may be urged, as checking us for the breach of a moral rule, and so the internal obligation of it be preserved. I answer, that many men may assent to several moral rules, in the same way as they come to the knowledge of other things ; according to their education, company, and the customs of their country ; and the *persuasion*, however got, will serve to set *Conscience* on work ; which is nothing else but *our own opinion or judgment of the moral rectitude or pravity of our own actions* : and if this be a proof of innate principles, contraries may be such ; since some men, with the same bent of conscience, prosecute what others avoid.—At the sacking of a town, see what touch of conscience an army feels for all the outrages they do. Murders in duels, when fashion has made them honourable, are committed without remorse of conscience ; and in many places, innocence in this case is the greatest ignominy.

If you say that *the breaking of a rule is no argument that it is unknown*; this I grant; but I say, *the generally allowed breach of it any where is a proof that it is not innate*. No practical principle can be innate, that is imprinted on the mind, as a duty, without supposing the Ideas of *God, law, obligation, punishment, a future life*, to be innate; which they are so far from being, that it is not every studious and thinking man in whom they are to be found clear and distinct.

“ Principles of actions indeed there are lodged in men’s appetites; but these are so far from being innate moral principles, that if they were left to their full swing, they would carry men to the over-turning of all morality. Moral laws are set as a curb and restraint to these exorbitant desires, which they cannot be but by rewards and punishments, that will over-balance the satisfaction any one shall propose to himself in the breach of the law. If therefore any thing be imprinted on the mind of all men as a law, all men must have a certain and unavoidable knowledge, that certain and unavoidable punishments will attend the breach of it. For if men can be ignorant or doubtful of what is innate, innate principles are insisted on, and urged to no purpose; truth and certainty (the things pretended) are not all secured by them: but men are in the same uncertain, floating estate with, as without them. An evident indubi-

table knowledge of unavoidable punishment, great enough to make the transgression very uneligible, must accompany an innate law ; unless with an innate law, they can suppose an innate gospel too. I would not be here mistaken, as if, because I deny an *innate* law, I thought there were none but *positive* laws. There is a great deal of difference between an innate law, and a law of nature ; between something imprinted on our minds in their very original, and something that we being ignorant of may attain to the knowledge of, by the use and due application of our natural faculties. And I think they equally forsake the truth, who running into the contrary extremes, either affirm an *innate law*, or deny that there is a law, *knowable by the light of nature* ; that is, without the help of *positive revelation*."

It might be expected that those who talk so confidently of these Innate Principles, should tell us which they are : but in truth, were there any such, there would be no need to teach them ; and there could be no more doubt of their number than of the number of our fingers. 'Tis easy to foresee, that if men of different sects should go about to give us a list of these innate practical principles, they would set down only such as suited their distinct hypotheses, and were fit to support the doctrines of their particular schools or churches :—a plain evidence that there are no such innate truths. Nay, many men not on-



ly deny these, but by denying *freedom* to mankind, and thereby making men no other than bare machines, take away all moral rules; unless we can conceive how any thing can be capable of a law, that is not a free agent: so that they who cannot reconcile *morality and mechanism* (which is not very easy) must reject all principles of virtue. (Lord Herbert's innate principles examined in Sections 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.)

“ Nor will it be of much moment here to offer that very ready, but not very material answer, viz. That the Innate Principles of morality, may, by education and custom, and the general opinion of those amongst whom we converse, be darkened, and at last quite worn out of the minds of men. Which assertion of theirs, if true, quite takes away the argument of universal consent, by which this opinion of innate principles is endeavoured to be proved: unless those men will think it reasonable, that their private persuasions, or that of their party, should pass for universal consent; a thing not unfrequently done, when men, presuming themselves to be the only masters of right reason, cast by the votes and opinions of the rest of mankind, as not worthy the reckoning. And then their argument stands thus: *The principles which all mankind allow for true, are innate; those that men of right reason admit, are the principles allowed by all mankind;*

*we, and those of our mind, are men of reason therefore we agreeing, our principles are innate;* which is a very pretty way of arguing, and a short cut to infallibility. For otherwise it will be very hard to understand, how there be some principles, which all men do acknowledge and agree in; and yet there are none of these principles, which are not by depraved custom, and ill education, blotted out of the minds of many men: which is to say that all men admit, but yet many men do deny, and dissent from them. And indeed the supposition of such first principles will serve us to very little purpose; and we shall be as much at a loss with as without them, if they may by any human power, such as is the will of our teachers, or opinions of our companions, be altered or lost in us: and notwithstanding all this boast of First Principles, and Innate Light, we shall be as much in the dark and uncertainty, as if there were no such thing at all: it being all one, to have no rule, and one that will warp any way, or amongst various and contrary rules, not to know which is the right. But concerning innate principles, I desire these men to say, whether they can or cannot, by education and custom, be blurred and blotted out: if they cannot we must find them in all mankind alike, and they must be clear in every body: and if they may suffer variation from adventitious notions, we then must find them clearest and most perspicuous nearest the foun-

tain, in children and illiterate people, who have received least impression from foreign opinions. Let them take which side they please, they will certainly find it inconsistent with visible matter of fact, and daily observation."

There are many *opinions* embraced by men of different countries, educations and tempers, as *first principles*, which from their contradiction cannot be true; but are so sacred, that men of good understanding in other matters will sooner part with their lives than suffer the truth of them to be questioned. This will not appear so wonderful, if we consider how doctrines, derived from no better original than the superstition of a nurse, or the authority of an old woman, may by length of time and consent of neighbours grow up to the dignity of principles in religion or morality. Those who are careful to principle children well (as they call it) teach them, as soon as they have any apprehension, the doctrines they would have them retain and profess; which, as they grow up, are confirmed in them by the open profession or tacit consent of those whose wisdom and piety they have an opinion of; and being never mentioned but as the foundation of Religion and Manners, acquire the reputation of unquestionable and innate truths. Men thus instructed, finding on reflection that their opinions are more antient than any thing which they can remember, conclude, from

having no memory of their origin, that they are the impress of God and nature upon their minds, and not taught them by any one else.

This will appear almost unavoidable, if we consider the nature of man, and the constitution of human affairs: that most men cannot live without employing their time in the daily labours of their calling, nor be quiet in their minds without some *foundation or principles to rest their thoughts on*. Almost every one has some *reverenced propositions*, by which he judges of Truth and Falseness, Right and Wrong; which some cannot, and others think they ought not to examine; so that few are to be found, who are not exposed by their ignorance, laziness, education, or precipitancy, to take them upon trust.

Custom, a greater power than nature, seldom fails to make children worship for divine what she has once inured them to bow their minds to: it is no wonder then that grown men, perplexed in the affairs of life, or hot in the pursuit of pleasures, should not seriously sit down to examine their own tenets; especially, when one of their principles is,—*that Principles ought not to be questioned*. Who is there almost, that dares shake the foundation of all his past thoughts and actions, contend with the reproach prepared for those who venture to dissent from the opinions of their country or party, and patiently prepare himself to bear the name of *Whimsical*,

*Sceptical*, or *Atheist*, which he is sure to meet who dares in the least scruple any of the common opinions? much less will he dare question the principles, when he shall think them, as most men do, the standards set up by God in his mind, to be the rule and touchstone of all other opinions, and what can hinder him from thinking them sacred, when he finds them the earliest of all his own thoughts and the most revered by others?

“It is easy to imagine, how by these means it comes to pass, that men worship the idols that have been set up in their minds; grow fond of the notions they have been long acquainted with there; and stand the characters of divinity upon absurdities and errors, become zealous votaries to bulls and monkeys, and contend too, fight, and die in defence of the opinions. *Dum solos credit habendos esse deos quos ipse colit.* For since the reasoning faculties of the soul, which are almost constantly, though not always warily nor wisely employed, would not know how to move, for want of a foundation and footing in most men, (who, through laziness or avocation, or not, or for want of time, or true helps, or for other causes, cannot penetrate into the principles of knowledge, and trace truth to its fountain and original,) it is natural for them, and almost unavoidable, to take up with some borrowed principles; which being reputed and presumed to be the evident proofs of other

ings, are thought not to need any other proofs themselves. Whoever shall receive any of these into his mind, and entertain them there, with the reverence usually paid to principles, never venturing to examine them, but accustoming himself to believe them, because they are to be believed, may take up from his education, and the fashions of his country, any absurdity for innate principles ; and by long poring on the same objects, so dim his sight, as to take monsters lodged in his own brain for the images of the deity, and the workmanship of his hands."

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#### CHAP. IV.

##### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT INNATE PRINCIPLES, BOTH SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL.

WE cannot have innate principles, unless we have innate ideas: for where Ideas themselves are not, there can be no knowledge, no assent, no mental or verbal propositions about them.—We have little reason to think that children bring many ideas into the world with them: for, excepting perhaps some

faint ideas of hunger, thirst, warmth, and some pains which they may have felt in the womb, there is not the least appearance of any settled ideas in them. *It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be* is certainly, if there be any such, an innate principle; but the ideas *impossibility* and *identity* are so remote from the thoughts of infancy and childhood, that I believe many grown men will be found to want them.

“I would gladly be resolved by one of seven or seventy years old, whether a man, being a creature consisting of soul and body, be the same man, when his body is changed; whether Euphorbus and Pythagoras, having had the same soul, were the same man, though they lived in several ages asunder: nay whether the Cock too, which had the same soul were not the same with both of them.”

He who reflects that Divine Justice shall bring to judgment, at the last day the very same persons to be happy or miserable in the other, who did well or ill in this life, will find it perhaps not easy to resolve with himself what makes the *same man*, or wherein *identity* consists.

*That the Whole is bigger than a Part* may, in any, be thought an innate principle: yet *whole* and *part* are relative ideas, belonging immediately to the positive ideas *extension* and *number*: but are these innate Ideas?

*That God is to be worshipped* deserves the first place among practical principles: but are the ideas of *God* and *worship* innate? If any idea can be imagined innate, that of *God* may of all others, for many reasons, be thought so: since it is hard to conceive how there should be *innate moral principles* without an *innate idea of a Deity*. Without a notion of a *Law-maker*, it is impossible to have a notion of a *Law*, and an obligation to observe it. Besides the antient Atheists, branded upon the records of history, Navigation has discovered, in these later ages, whole nations without any notion of a *God*, any *Religion*. The sect of the *Learned*, keeping to the old religion of *China*, and the ruling party there, are all of them *Atheists*: and though in more civilized countries only some profligate wretches own it bare-facedly now, yet perhaps we should hear more of it than we do from others, did not the fear of the magistrate's sword or their neighbour's censure tie up people's tongues.

Though all mankind had a notion of *God*, it would not prove the *Idea* of him to be innate: nor is the want of such a name or notion any argument against the being of a *God*. "For men being furnished with words by the common Language of their own countries, can scarce avoid having some kind of *Ideas* of those things, whose Names those they converse with have occasion frequently to mention to



them. And if it carry with it the notion of Excellency, Greatness, or something extraordinary; if Apprehension and Concernment accompany it; if the fear of absolute and irresistible Power set it on upon the mind, the *Idea* is likely to sink the deeper, and spread the farther; especially if it be such an *Idea*, as is agreeable to the common light of reason, and naturally deducible from every part of our knowledge, as that of a God is. For the visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of the Creation, that a rational creature, who will but seriously reflect on them, cannot miss the discovery of a *Deity*: and the influence that the discovery of such a being must necessarily have on the minds of all, that have but once heard of it, is so great, and carries such a weight of thought and communication with it, that it seems stranger to me that a whole Nation of Men should be any where found so brutish as to want the notion of a God, than that they should be without any notion of Numbers or Fire.

The name of God being once mentioned in any part of the world, to express a superior, powerful, wise, invisible being, the suitableness of such a notion to the principles of common reason, and the Interest men will always have to mention it often, must necessarily spread it far and wide, and continue it down to all generations: though yet the

general reception of this name, and some imperfect and unsteady notions, conveyed thereby to the unthinking part of mankind, prove not the Idea to be imate; but only that they, who made the discovery, had made a right use of their reason, thought maturely of the causes of things, and traced them to their original; from whom other less considering people, having once received so important a notion, it could not easily be lost again."

The argument,—“that it is suitable to the goodness of God to imprint on our minds a notion of himself, and not to leave us in the dark in so grand a concernment; and therefore he has done it”—proves more than its advocates expect from it. For if we may conclude that God hath done for men all that they judge best for them, because it is suitable to his goodness so to do; then he has stamped on their minds not only an idea of himself, but of all that they ought to know or believe of him, and to do in obedience to his will; and that he has given them a *will* and *affections* conformable to it.

The Romanists say,—“Tis best for men, and so suitable to the goodness of God, that there should be an infallible judge of controversies on earth; and therefore there is one.”—and I, by the same reason, say,—“Tis better for men, that every man himself should be infallible”—and leave them to consider, whether by the force of this argument they shall

think that every man is so. I think it a very good argument to say, *the infinitely wise God hath made it so, and therefore it is best*; but it seems to me a little too much Confidence in our own wisdom to say *I think it best, and therefore God hath made it so*.

I doubt not to shew that a man, only by the right use of his natural abilities, may attain the knowledge of a God, and other things that concern him; beyond which, he was no more obliged by his goodness to implant those Innate notions in his mind, than, having given him reason, hands, and materials, to build him bridges or houses.

Can we think that the Ideas men have of God are his own immediate impressions on them, when we see that in the same country, under one and the same name, men have far different, nay, often contrary and inconsistent ideas and conceptions of him? Their agreeing in a Name or Sound will scarce prove an innate notion of him.

Another idea, which it would be of general use for mankind to have, is that of *Substance*; which we neither have, nor can have by Sensation or Reflection: but by which we signify an uncertain supposition of we know not what Idea, which we take to be the *Substratum* or support of those Ideas we do know.

Whatever Idea was never perceived by the mind, was never in the mind. Whatever idea is in the

mind, is either an actual perception, or having been such, is so in the mind that by the memory it can be made an actual perception again. The perception of an idea, *without memory*, is to the understanding a new idea; *with memory*, brings a consciousness that it had been in the mind before. What is not actually in view, or in the memory, is not in the mind at all.

I once talked with a blind man, who lost his sight by the small pox, when he was a child, and had no more notion of colours than one born blind. Can any one say that this man had then any ideas of colours in his mind, any more than one born blind?

Some sorts of Truths, because of their general and easy reception, have been mistaken for innate: for some Ideas and Notions offer themselves to our faculties more readily, and are more generally received, according as the organs of our bodies and powers of our minds happen to be employed. The greater part of mankind, taking things upon trust, lazily enslave their minds to the dictates of others in doctrines which it is their duty carefully to examine: another part employ their thoughts only about some few things, and never turn them to other enquiries.

“What censure doubting thus of Innate Principles may deserve from men, who will be apt to call it pulling up the old foundations of knowledge and certainty, I cannot tell: I persuade myself, at least,

that the way I have pursued, being conformable to Truth, lays those foundations surer. This, I am certain, I have not made it my business, either to quit or follow any authority in the ensuing discourse: Truth has been my only aim; and wherever that has appeared to lead, my thoughts have impartially followed, without minding whether the footsteps of any other lay that way, or no. Not that I want a due respect to other men's opinions; but after all, the *greatest reverence is due to Truth*; and I hope it will not be thought arrogance to say, that perhaps we should make greater progress in the discovery of rational and contemplative knowledge, if we sought it in the fountain, *in the Consideration of Things themselves*; and made use rather of our own thoughts than other men's to find it. For, I think, we may as rationally hope to see with other men's eyes as to know by other men's understandings. So much as we ourselves consider and comprehend of truth and reason, so much we possess of real and true knowledge. The floating of other men's opinions in our brains makes us not one jot the more knowing, though they happen to be true. What in them was Science, is in us but Opiniatrety; whilst we give up our assent only to reverend Names, and do not, as they did, employ our own reason to understand those Truths which gave them reputation. Aristotle was certainly a knowing man, but no body ever thought him so, be-

cause he blindly embraced, and confidently vented the opinions of another. And if the taking up of another's principles, without examining them, made not him a philosopher, I suppose it will hardly make any body else so. In the Sciences, every one has so much, as he really knows and comprehends: what he believes only, and takes upon trust, are but shreads; which, however well in the whole piece, make no considerable addition to his stock who gathers them. Such borrowed wealth, like fairy-money, though it were gold in the hand from which he received it, will be but leaves and dust when it comes to use.

When men have found some general propositions that could not be doubted of, as soon as understood, it was, I know, a short and easy way to conclude them innate. This being once received, it eased the lazy from the pains of search, and stopt the enquiry of the doubtful, concerning all that was once stiled Innate: and it was of no small advantage to those who affected to be masters and teachers, to make this the *Principle of Principles*, that Principles must not be questioned: for having once established this tenet,—that there are Innate Principles, it put their followers upon a necessity of receiving some doctrines as such; which was to take them off from the use of their own reason and judgment, and put them upon believing and taking them upon trust without farther examination: in which posture of

blind credulity, they might be more easily governed by, and made useful to some sort of men, who had the skill and office to principle and guide them. Nor is it a small power it gives one man over another, to have the authority to be the dictator of principles, and teacher of unquestionable truths: and to make a man swallow that for an Innate Principle, which may serve to his purpose who teaches them. Whereas, had they examined the ways whereby men came to the knowledge of many universal truths, they would have found them to result in the minds of men, from the being of things themselves, when duly considered; and that they were discovered by the application of those faculties that were fitted by Nature to receive and judge of them, when duly employed about them.

To shew how the understanding proceeds herein, is the design of the following discourse; which I shall proceed to, when I have first premised, that hitherto to clear my way to those foundations, which I conceive are the only true ones, whereon to establish those notions we can have of our own knowledge, it hath been necessary for me to give an account of the reasons I had to doubt of Innate Principles: and since the arguments which are against them do some of them rise from common received opinions, I have been forced to take several things for granted, which is hardly avoidable to any

one, whose task it is to shew the falsehood or improbability of any tenet: it happening in controversial discourses, as it does in assaulting of towns; where if the ground be but firm, whereon the batteries are erected, there is no farther enquiry of whom it is borrowed, nor whom it belongs to, so it affords but a fit rise for the present purpose. But in the future part of this discourse, designing to raise an edifice uniform, and consistent with itself, as far as my own experience and observation will assist me, I hope to erect it on such a basis, that I shall not need to shore it up with props and buttresses, leaning on borrowed or begged foundations: or at least, if mine prove a castle in the air, I will endeavour it shall be all of a piece, and hang together. Wherein I warn the reader, not to expect undeniable cogent demonstrations, unless I may be allowed the privilege, not seldom assumed by others, to take my principles for granted; and then I doubt not, but I can demonstrate too. All that I shall say for the principles I proceed on, is, that I can only appeal to men's own unprejudiced experience and observation, whether they be true or no; and this is enough for a man who professes no more, than to lay down candidly and freely his own conjectures concerning a subject lying somewhat in the dark, without any other design than an unbiass'd enquiry after Truth."



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## BOOK II.

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### CHAP. I.

#### OF IDEAS IN GENERAL, AND THEIR ORIGINAL

EVERY man being conscious that he thinks, and that his thinking is about the Ideas in his mind, our first enquiry is, *how he comes by them*; in which I shall appeal to every one's observation and experience.

Suppose the mind without any ideas, like white paper, void of all characters: how comes it to be furnished? whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? from experience. The Understanding gets all its ideas, or materials of thinking, from observation, employed either *about external sensible objects*, or about the *internal operations of our minds, perceived and reflected on by ourselves*.

Our Senses convey into the mind, from particular sensible objects, several distinct *perceptions*; that is, what produces there those perceptions: which source

of most of our ideas I call *Sensation*: such are our ideas of Yellow, White, Heat, Cold, Soft, Hard, Bitter, Sweet.

The perception of the operations of our own mind as employed about the ideas it has got, is the other source of our ideas; and this I call *Reflection*; such are, Perception, Thinking, Reasoning, Knowing, Willing; which source every man has wholly in himself; and though it be not sense, (as having nothing to do with external objects,) yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called *internal sense*, being that notice which the mind takes of its own operations and the manner of them.

I use the term *Operations* in a large sense, not merely for the actions of the mind about its ideas, but for certain Passions arising from them; as the *satisfaction* or *uneasiness* from any thought.

Men have fewer or more simple ideas *from without* according to the greater or less variety of the objects they converse with; and *from within*, according as they reflect more or less on them.

Children, in their first years, have their senses so constantly solicited by new objects, that they seldom make much reflection on what passes within them, till they come to riper years.

A man first has ideas, when he begins to perceive, I pretend not to determine whether the existence of the soul be antecedent to, coeval with, or subsequent

to the organization of the body: but I do not conceive it more necessary for the soul always to think, than for the body always to move: the perception of Ideas being (as I conceive) to the soul what motion is to the body, not its essence, but one of its operations.

I do not say that there is no soul in a man, because he is not sensible of it in his sleep: but I do say, he cannot think at any time, waking or sleeping, without being sensible of it. The soul in a waking man is never without thought, because it is the condition of being awake: but whether sleeping without dreaming be not an affection of the whole man, mind as well as body, may be worth a waking man's consideration; it being hard to conceive that any thing should think and not be conscious of it. If a man sleeping thinks without knowing it, the sleeping and waking man are two persons.

They make the soul and the man two persons, who make the *soul* think apart what the *man* is not conscious of: for I suppose nobody will make Identity of persons to consist in the soul's being united to the very same numerical particles of matter; as then it will be impossible, in the constant flux of the particles of our bodies, that any man should be the *same person* two moments together.

We have sometimes instances of Perception, whilst we are asleep, and retain the memory of those

Thoughts : but those who dream know how extravagant and incoherent they generally are. The dreams of sleeping men are, as I take it, all made up of the waking man's Ideas, though for the most part oddly put together.

They who say that a man always thinks, though not conscious of it, may as well say that a man is always hungry, but does not always feel it; whereas hunger consists in that very sensation, as thinking consists in consciousness, or the perception of what passes in a man's own mind.

To define the soul to be *a substance that always thinks* can only serve to make many men suspect that they have no souls at all, since they find a good part of their lives pass away without thinking : for I know no definitions or suppositions of any sect that are of force to destroy constant experience ; and perhaps 'tis the affectation of knowing beyond what we perceive that makes so much useless dispute and noise in the world.

In the reception of simple Ideas the Understanding is merely *passive* : it cannot help acquiring these materials of knowledge : it can no more refuse to have them, or alter them when they are imprinted, or blot them out, and make new ones, than a mirror can refuse, alter, or obliterate the images or Ideas which the objects set before it produce therein.

## CHAP. II.

## OF SIMPLE IDEAS.

OF our Ideas some are *simple*, and some *complex*. Qualities that are blended in the same subject produce simple and distinct Ideas in the mind. the sight we have at once distinct ideas of *motion* and *colour*: by the Touch, of *softness* and *warmth*. Yet the simple ideas, thus united in the same subject are as perfectly distinct as those that come in by different senses. When the Understanding is once stored with these simple ideas, it can repeat, compare, and unite them to an almost infinite variety and so make at pleasure *new complex ideas*: but the force of the understanding can invent or destroy one simple idea: all the power of man reaching further than to compound and divide the materials made to his hand.

I have followed the common opinion of man having but five senses; though perhaps there may be justly counted more: but either supposition serves equally to my present purpose.

## CHAP. III.

## OF IDEAS OF ONE SENSE.

OF our Simple Ideas, some come into the mind *by one sense only*:—some *by more senses than one*:—some *by reflection only*:—and others *by all the ways of sensation and reflection*.

All Ideas of *colours, sounds, smells, and tastes*, come in only by one sense. The most considerable of those belonging to the *touch*, are, heat, cold, and solidity; the rest consisting almost wholly in the *sensible configuration*, as, smooth, rough,—or adhesion of the parts, as, hard, soft, tough, brittle.

We have many more simple Ideas than we have names for; the variety of smells, for instance, are expressed by, sweet, and stinking; though the smells of a rose and a violet, both sweet, are very distinct, &c. &c.

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 CHAP. IV.

## OF SOLIDITY.

WE receive the Idea of *solidity* by the touch; it arises from the resistance we find in a body to the entrance of another body into the place it possesses.

I consider *impenetrability* as a consequence of solidity, rather than solidity itself. This is the idea belongs to body, whereby we conceive it to fill space. *Space* differs from *Solidity* in this, that it will allow two bodies moved towards each other to touch : and *hardness* consists in a firm cohesion of the parts of matter, making up masses of a sensible bulk, so that the whole does not easily change its figure. This *cohesion of parts* gives no more solidity to the hardest body than to the softest :—water is as solid as adamant : for that a diamond will more easily resist the approach of two bodies than water, is owing to the *seperability of the parts* of water by a side motion.

In an experiment made at Florence, water confined in a hollow globe of gold, and screwed in a press, exuded through the pores of the gold.

The *extension of body* is the cohesion or continuity of solid, separable, moveable parts : the *extension of space* is the continuity of unsolid, inseparable, immoveable parts. Of pure space, then, and solidity, I think I can attain distinct ideas.—

## CHAP. V.

## SIMPLE IDEAS BY MORE THAN ONE SENSE.

Ideas got by more than one sense, are of  
*or extension, figure, rest, and motion*: for  
 make impressions both on the eyes and touch.—

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## CHAP. VI.

## OF SIMPLE IDEAS OF REFLECTION.

THE Ideas of reflection are the operations of  
 mind about its other ideas: such are *perception*,  
*volition*, or *willing*. The power of  
 understanding is called the *understanding*; the power of  
 will, the *will*; these are denominated *faculties*.

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## CHAP. VII.

SIMPLE IDEAS BOTH OF SENSATION AND  
REFLECTION.

Simple Ideas which we get by all the ways of  
 sensation and reflection, are; *pleasure*, or, *delight*,  
 or, *uneasiness*, *power*, *existence*, *unity*.—



Pleasure and pain, whether of mind or body, signify, whatever delights or molests us.—The mind can *choose* among its ideas which it will think on; and has a *perception of delight* joined to several thoughts and sensations. Pain is in many cases annexed to the very ideas which delight us; as in the different degrees of heat. *Existence* and *Unity* are suggested to us by every object without and every idea within. The idea of *Power* is got by observing that we can move our own bodies at pleasure,—and that natural bodies are constantly producing effects in one another.

*Succession* is another idea which, though suggested by the senses, is more constantly offered by the *train of ideas* passing through our minds without intermission.

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## CHAP. VIII.

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING SIMPLE IDEAS.

**P**OSITIVE Ideas sometimes arise from privative causes: that is the *causes* which produce them are barely *privations* in those subjects from which we

derive those Ideas. Were I enquiring into the natural causes of perception, I should offer this as a reason why a privative cause may produce a positive Idea:—that, All sensation being produced in us only by different degrees and modes of motion in our animal spirits, variously agitated by external objects, the abatement of any former motion must as necessarily produce a new Idea, as the variation or increase of it. Does not the shadow of a man, which consists of the absence of light, cause as clear an idea in the mind as a man himself? Indeed, we have *negative names* which stand for the absence of *positive ideas*; as, *insipid, silence, annihilation*, denoting the absence of the positive Ideas, *taste, sound, being*. But it will be hard to determine whether we have really any positive ideas from privative causes, till it be determined, whether *rest* be any more a privation than *motion*. We must no more suppose our *Ideas* to be *exact images* of the *qualities* of bodies, than the *names* we give our *Ideas* to be exact images of *them*. The power in any body to produce an Idea, I call a *quality* in that body. Thus a snow ball producing the ideas of *white, cold, round*, its powers to produce those Ideas I call *qualities*. I sometimes put the Ideas for the qualities themselves.

*Primary qualities* are such as are utterly inseparable from body in whatsoever state it be: viz. soli-

idity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number.

*Secondary qualities* are nothing in the objects themselves, but powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities, (that is, by the bulk, figure, texture, and motion of their insensible parts) as, colours, sounds, tastes, &c. A *third sort* might be added, which are allowed to be barely powers, though they are as much real qualities in the subject as those which I call, for distinction, Secondary Qualities: for the power of fire to produce a new colour or consistency in wax by its primary qualities is as much a quality in fire, as the power it has to produce in me a new idea of warmth or burning, which I felt not before by the same primary qualities, viz. the bulk, texture, and motion of its insensible parts. The primary and secondary qualities of bodies produce ideas in us by impulse: for if external objects be not united to our minds, some motion must be continued, by our nerves or some parts of our bodies, to the brains or seat of sensation, and by the operation of insensible particles on the senses produce Ideas. It is not more impossible to conceive that the ideas of a blue colour and a sweet smell in a violet should be annexed to certain motions of insensible particles of matter, (with which they have no similitude,) than that the idea of pain should be annexed to the motion of a piece of steel dividing our flesh, (with which that idea has no resemblance.)

The *Ideas* of primary qualities of bodies are *resemblances* of them; and their patterns really exist in the bodies themselves: *Ideas* of secondary qualities are not resemblances of them; and nothing like our *Ideas* exists in the bodies themselves. The particular bulk, number, figure, and motion of the parts of fire, or snow, are really in them whether perceived or not; but light, heat, whiteness, and coldness, are not really in them, but depend on our sensations. The same *water* may produce the *Idea* of *cold* by one hand, and of *heat* by the other, which were impossible if those ideas were in the water: we may conceive this if we imagine the warmth in our hands to be a certain sort and degree of motion in the minute particles of our nerves, or animal spirits; but *figure* never produces the idea of *square* by one hand, and of *round* by the other.

1st. The bulk, figure, number, situation, and motion or rest of the solid parts of bodies, I call *real, original, or primary qualities*.

2d. The powers in bodies to produce immediately in us the ideas of several colours, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings, by reason of their primary qualities, I call *secondary, imputed, or sensible qualities*; and to distinguish them from the third sort, *secondary qualities immediately perceivable*.

3d. The powers in bodies, by their primary qualities, to operate on other bodies so as to change their

primary qualities, and make them produce ideas in us different from what they did before, I call, *secondary qualities mediately perceivable*.

Ideas of the third sort are not resemblances: for we plainly discover that the quality produced has commonly no resemblance with any thing in the thing producing it; thus we never believe the change of colour produced in a fair face by the sun to be the perception or resemblance of any thing in the sun:—or, our senses being able to discover the *likeness* or *unlikeness* of *sensible qualities* in two different external objects, we never fancy any sensible quality produced in a subject to be a quality communicated, but only an effect of bare power, unless we find such a sensible quality in the subject producing it. But our senses not discovering any *unlikeness* between our *Ideas*, and the *qualities* of objects producing them, we are apt to imagine that our ideas are resemblances of something in the objects, and not the effects of certain powers in their primary qualities.

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## CHAP. IX.

### OF PERCEPTION.

*PERCEPTION* is the first faculty of the mind exercised about our Ideas; it is the first and simplest idea we have from reflection;—and is by some called

Thinking in general. *Thinking* is more properly an active operation of the mind, when it gives a voluntary attention to its ideas; *Perception* a passive state of the mind, when it perceives what it cannot avoid. There is only Perception, when the mind receives an impression by the senses, or when it thinks. Impressions may be made on the organs without producing perceptions, owing to want of observation in the mind.—Children probably get the ideas of *hunger* and *warmth* in the womb. Light is probably one of the first ideas that children get, and they always turn their eyes towards it.

“ We are farther to consider concerning Perception, that the *Ideas we receive by sensation* are often in grown people altered by the *judgment*, without our taking notice of it. When we set before our eyes a round globe, of any uniform colour, *v. g.* Gold, Alabaster, or Jet, 'tis certain, that the *Idea*, thereby imprinted in our mind, is of a flat circle, variously shadow'd, with several degrees of light and brightness coming to our eyes. But we having by use been accustomed to perceive what kind of appearance convex bodies are wont to make in us; what alterations are made in the reflections of light, by the difference of the sensible figures of Bodies; the judgment presently, by an habitual custom, alters the appearances into their causes: so that from that, which truly is variety of shadow or co-

lour, collecting the figure, it makes it pass for a mark of figure, and frames to itself the perception of a convex figure, and an uniform colour; when the Idea we receive from thence, is only a Plane variously coloured; as is evident in painting. To which purpose, I shall here insert a Problem of that very ingenious and studious promoter of real knowledge, the learned and worthy Mr. Molineux, which he was pleased to send me in a letter some months since; and it is this: *Suppose a man born blind, and now adult, and taught by his touch to distinguish between a Cube and a Sphere of the same metal, and nighly of the same bigness, so as to tell, when he felt one and t'other, which is the Cube, which the Sphere. Suppose then the Cube and Sphere placed on a table, and the blind man to be made to see: Quære, Whether by his sight, before he touch'd them, he could now distinguish, and tell, which is the Globe, which the Cube.* To which the acute and judicious proposer answers, *not.* For though he has obtained the experience of how a Globe, how a Cube effects his touch; yet he has not yet attained the experience, that what affects his touch so or so, must affect his sight so or so: or that a protuberant angle in the Cube, that pressed his hand unequally, shall appear to his eye, as it does in the Cube. I agree with this thinking gentleman, whom I am proud to call my friend, in his answer to this his Problem; and

am of opinion that the blind man, at first sight, would not be able with certainty to say which was the Globe, which the Cube, whilst he only saw them; though he could unerringly name them by his touch, and certainly distinguish them by the difference of their figures felt. This I have set down, and leave with my reader, as an occasion for him to consider how much he may be beholden to Experience, Improvement, and acquired notions, where he thinks he has not the least use of, or help from them: and the rather, because this observing gentleman farther adds, that having, upon the occasion of my book, proposed this to divers very ingenious men, he hardly ever met with one, that at first gave the answer to it which he thinks true, till by hearing his reasons they were convinced."

This alteration is most common in the ideas received by sight, as being the most comprehensive sense, conveying to our minds the ideas of light and colours, peculiar to that sense, and the very different ideas of space, figure, and motion.—As the mind is thought to take up no space, so its actions seem to require no time:—Habits produce actions in us which escape our observation:—how frequently do we cover our eyes with our eye-lids, without perceiving that we are in the dark: it is not then so strange that the mind should without notice change the idea of its sensation into that of its judgment.—



Perception makes the difference between the animal kingdom and the inferior parts of nature : the motion in vegetables arising from contact with other bodies I attribute purely to mechanism, not to sensation. Perception is in some degree in all sorts of animals but I suppose from the make of an oyster, that has not so many nor so quick senses as man or many other animals.—The fewer senses a man has, the duller the impressions made on them, and the faculties employed about them, the farther is he from knowledge.

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## CHAP. X.

### OF RETENTION.

THE next faculty of the mind in its progress towards knowledge is *retention*, or the keeping of those simple ideas which it has received from sensation, or reflection : which is done in two ways,—by *contemplation*, or the keeping of an idea for some time actually in view ; and by *memory*, or the receiving of ideas it has once acquired. Attention and Repetition help much to the fixing of ideas ; but those attended with pleasure or pain make the deepest and most lasting impression, the great business of the

senses being to take notice of what hurts or benefits the body.

“The *Ideas*, as well as children of our youth, often die before us: and our minds represent to us those tombs, to which we are approaching; where, though the brass and marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery moulders away. The pictures drawn in our minds are laid in fading colours, and if not sometimes refreshed, vanish and disappear. How much the constitution of our bodies, and the make of our animal spirits are concerned in this, and whether the temper of the brain make this difference, that in some, it retains the characters drawn on it like marble, in others, like free-stone, and in others, little better than sand, I shall not here enquire: though it may seem probable, that the constitution of the body does sometimes influence the memory; since we sometimes find a disease quite strip the mind of all its *Ideas*; and the flames of a fever in a few days calcine all those images to dust and confusion, which seemed to be as lasting as if graved in marble.”

It seems probable that the constitution of the body does sometimes influence the memory; since we often-times find a disease quite strip the mind of all its *Ideas*. In receiving ideas lodged in the memory, the mind is often active; it depending on the will to bring forward those dormant pictures. The under-

standing knows when its ideas are new, and when only revived. Where memory is wanting, the rest of our faculties are of little use. There are two defects of memory; *oblivion*, or the total loss of our Ideas; and *slowness*, or not reviving them quickly; which, if in a great degree, is *stupidity*.—In having our Ideas ready at hand on all occasions consists what we call Invention and Fancy.

Superior intellectual Beings may perhaps have constantly in view the whole scene of all their former actions. The omniscience of God may satisfy us of the possibility of this.

It is reported of the extraordinary Mr. Pascal, that till decay of health impaired his memory, he forgot nothing of what he had done, read, or thought, in any part of his rational age.

Brutes appear to have perception and memory; as birds will imitate tunes, and remember them,

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## CHAP. XI.

### OF DISCERNING.

**T**HE evidence and certainty of several very general propositions, which have passed for innate truths, depends on the faculty of distinguishing one thing from

another. The *discerning faculty* then is that whereby the mind perceives two ideas to be the same or different.

“ If in having our Ideas in the Memory ready at hand, consists Quickness of parts ; in this of having them unconfused, and being able nicely to distinguish one thing from another, where there is but the least difference, consists, in a great measure, the Exactness of judgment and Clearness of reason, which is to be observed in one man above another. And hence, perhaps, may be given some reason of that common observation,—That men who have a great deal of Wit, and prompt Memories, have not always the clearest Judgment, or deepest Reason. For Wit lying most in the assemblage of Ideas, and putting those together with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any resemblance or congruity, thereby to make up pleasant pictures, and agreeable visions in the Fancy : *Judgment*, on the contrary, lies quite on the other side, in separating carefully one from another Ideas wherein can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being misled by similitude, and by affinity to take one thing for another. This is a way of proceeding quite contrary to Metaphor and Allusion, wherein for the most part lies that entertainment and pleasantry of Wit, which strikes so lively on the fancy, and therefore so acceptable to all people ; because its beauty appears

at first sight, and there is required no labour of thought to examine what truth or reason there is in it. The mind, without looking any farther, rests satisfied with the agreeableness of the picture, and the gaiety of the fancy: and it is a kind of an affront to go about to examine it by the severe rules of truth and good reason; whereby it appears, that it consists in something that is not perfectly conformable to them."

To avoid confusion we should take care that our Ideas be *clear* and *determinate*, for the senses sometimes convey different ideas from the same object; sugar in a fever may have a bitter taste.

*Comparing* ideas in respect of extent, degrees, time, place, &c. produces all our ideas of relation. Brutes probably compare ideas only in some few sensible circumstances of objects themselves: man compares general ideas.

*Composition* is another act of the mind, by which it makes a complex idea out of several simple ones; as the idea of a *dozen* out of several *units*. Brutes probably compound but little; though they take in, and retain combinations of simple ideas; as possibly the shape, smell, and voice, make up a dog's complex idea of his master. It is said, a bitch will be as fond of young foxes, when they have sucked her, as of her own puppies. Those animals which have numerous broods appear to have no knowledge of their number.

When children have once got ideas, they begin by degrees to express them by articulate sounds either borrowed or created. If every particular Idea had a distinct name, names would be endless: particular Ideas, then, considered apart from the circumstances of time, place, &c. become general representatives of all of the same kind, and their names general names: this is called *Abstraction*: thus, *whiteness* represents the appearance of chalk, snow, and milk. Brutes, not having the use of general signs, have not the faculty of abstraction. This is the proper difference that separates man from the brutes.

This seems to be the difference between ideots and madmen; that madmen put wrong ideas together, and so make wrong propositions, but argue right from them;—idiots make few or no propositions, and reason scarce at all. A madman fancying himself a king, with a right inference, requires suitable attendance, respect, &c. acting like a man who reasons right from wrong principles.

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## CHAP. XII.

### OF COMPLEX IDEAS.

IN the reception of all its simple Ideas the mind is wholly *passive*: but *it exerts itself* to frame others

out of these, chiefly by these three acts:—*the composition of simple Ideas:—the comparison of any two ideas, whether simple or complex:—and by abstraction.*

Ideas compounded of several simple ones I call *complex*; as, beauty, gratitude, a man, an army, the Universe: these the mind can make voluntarily but its simple Ideas are all from things themselves and must be suggested to it. Complex Ideas may be reduced to the three heads of *modes, substances* and *relations*.

A *mode* is a complex idea, which does not contain the supposition of subsisting by itself, but is considered as a dependency on, or an affection of substance, as, *triangle, gratitude, murder.*

Modes are simple and mixed: a *simple mode* is a variation, or combination of one simple idea; as *dozen, score.*

A combination of simple ideas of several kinds is a *mixed mode*; as, *beauty*, consisting of a certain composition of colour, figure, &c.

Ideas of *substances* are such combinations of simple Ideas as represent distinct particular things subsisting by themselves, in which the idea of substance is the chief: thus the ideas of a certain figure, with the powers of motion, thought, and reasoning, joined to substance, make the idea of a *man*.

Ideas of substance are *single* or *collective*: the

first is of one thing existing separately, as a *man*, a *sheep*: the other of several put together; as, an *army of men*, a *flock of sheep*: which collective ideas are as much each one single idea, as that of a *man*, an *unit*.—Ideas of *relation* are founded on the comparison of ideas one with another.

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## CHAP. XIII.

### OF SPACE AND ITS SIMPLE MODES.

THE modifications of a simple Idea are as distinct as any two ideas: for the idea of *two* is as distinct from that of *one*, as *blueness* from *heat*.

*Space* considered merely as length between any two beings is called *Distance*; considered as *length*, *breadth*, and *thickness*, it is called *Capacity*; *extension* is applied to it in whatever manner considered.

Our idea of *immensity* is got by the power of adding together any parts of space.

*Figure*, another modification of the idea of space, is the relation which the parts of the termination of extension, or circumscribed space, have among themselves.

The idea of *place* also is got by considering the



relation of distance betwixt any thing and any two or more points, which are considered as keeping the same distance one with another, that is, at rest.

Some think that *body* and *extension* are the same thing : whereas *body* means something solid and extended, whose parts are separable and moveable different ways ; and *extension*, the space that lies between those solid coherent parts, and which is possessed by them. It is true *solidity* cannot exist without *extension* : but many ideas require others as necessary to their existence or conception, which yet are distinct ideas ; thus *motion* cannot be conceived without *space*.

*Extension* does not include solidity, nor resistance to the motion of body, as *body* does : the parts of pure space are inseparable and cannot even mentally be divided : a man may indeed consider such a part of space, as a *foot* ; but this is a partial consideration, not a mental separation. We cannot divide *mentally*, without considering two superficies separate from one another ; nor *actually*, without making two superficies disjoined from one another. We can consider *light* in the Sun without its *heat* ; but this is a consideration of two things existing separately.

The parts of Space are inseparable, immoveable, and without resistance to the motion of body ; *motion*, being the change of distance between any two things, cannot belong to parts that are inseparable.

The division of beings into Bodies and Spirits, does not prove Space and Body the same; which those who deny, attempt to prove by this dilemma:—"Either this space is something or nothing; if nothing be between two bodies, they must necessarily touch: and if space be something, is it body or spirit."—But I ask, how they know that there can be none but solid beings without thought, (i. e. Bodies) and thinking beings without extension, (i. e. Spirits)? I do not pretend to know, whether this *space* void of body, be *substance* or *accident*. I ask, whether Substance be applied in the same sense, to the infinite incomprehensible God, to finite spirit, and to body; and if so, whether agreeing in the common nature of *substance*, they only differ in modifications of it? which will be a very harsh doctrine. If body be not supposed infinite, which I think no one will affirm, could a man, placed by God at the extremity of corporeal beings, stretch his hand beyond his body? if he could, there must be space: if he could not, there must be some external hindrance: and I ask, is that hindrance substance or accident?—It is as fair then to conclude, that where nothing hinders, a body put in motion may move on, as that where nothing is between two bodies, they must necessarily touch: for pure space is sufficient to take away the necessity of mutual contact, but not sufficient to stop motion.

Those who assert the impossibility of *space* without *matter*, not only make body infinite, but deny God's power to annihilate any part of matter : and whoever allows that he can annihilate any part of matter admits the possibility of a *vacuum*. The motion of bodies too within our view plainly evinces a *vacuum*.

It is not necessary to prove the real existence of a *vacuum*, but only the idea of it ; since the question is, whether the idea of *space* or *extension* be the same with the idea of *body* ? which is plain from the dispute about *vacuum* and *plenum*. The idea of *extension* joins itself so inseparably to most visible and tangible qualities, that some are apt to conclude the essence of body to be extension. But let them reflect on their ideas of tastes and smells, as much as on those of sight and touch, and examine their ideas of hunger, thirst, and several other pains, they will find that they include in them no idea of *extension* at all ; which is but an affection of body, as well as the rest. If those ideas which are constantly joined to all others, are therefore concluded to be their *essences*, then Unity will be the essence of every thing, being conjoined with every object of sensation or reflection. To avoid confusion it were better to apply *extension* only to matter, and *expansion* to space in general, with or without solid matter possessing it ; so as to say, *space is expanded* and *body*

is *extended*. " The knowing precisely what our words stand for, would, I imagine, in this, as well as a great many other cases, quickly end the dispute. For I am apt to think, that men, when they come to examine them, find their simple ideas all generally to agree, though in discourse with one another, they perhaps confound one another with different names. I imagine that men who abstract their thoughts, and do well examine the Ideas of their own minds, cannot much differ in thinking; however they may perplex themselves with words, according to the way of speaking of the several schools or sects they have been bred up in: though amongst unthinking men, who examine not scrupulously and carefully their own Ideas, and strip them not from the marks men use for them, but confound them with words, there must be endless dispute, wrangling, and jargon; especially if they be learned bookish men, devoted to some sect, and accustomed to the language of it; and have learned to talk after others. But if it should happen, that any two thinking men should really have different Ideas, I do not see how they could discourse or argue one with another. Here I must not be mistaken, to think that every floating imagination in men's brains is presently of that sort of Ideas I speak of. 'Tis not easy for the mind to put off those confused notions and prejudices it has imbibed from custom, inadvertency, and common

conversation: it requires pains and assiduity to examine its Ideas, until it resolves them into those clear and distinct simple ones, out of which they are compounded: and to see which, amongst its simple ones, have or have not a necessary connection and dependence one upon another. Until a man doth this in the primary and original notions of things, he builds upon floating and uncertain principles, and will often find himself at a loss."

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## CHAP. XIV.

### OF DURATION.

**THE** Idea of *duration* is got from the fleeting and perpetually perishing parts of succession. The answer of a great man to one who asked, What Time was—*Si non rogas intelligo*, (which amounts to this—the more I set myself to think of it, the less I understand it) might perhaps persuade one that Time which reveals all other things, is itself not to be discovered. The distance between any parts of the succession of Ideas in our minds, or between the appearance of any two ideas, is what we call *duration*: for while we are thinking, or receiving succes-

nively several ideas, we know that we exist ; and so we call the continuation of our existence the *duration* of ourselves. When the succession of Ideas ceases, our Idea of duration ceases with it, as is the case in a sound sleep. It would be the same with a waking man, if he could keep only one Idea in his mind ; for it is plain that when our thoughts are intently fixed on one thing, time seems much shorter than it is.

If during sleep we dream and have a variety of ideas, we have also a sensation of Duration, and of the length of it. From experience we know how to make allowance for the length of duration while we sleep, or are not thinking ; just as we know how to apply the idea of extension to distances where no body is seen or felt.

*Motion* only produces the idea of *succession* by producing a train of distinguishable ideas ; for a body really moving gives us no perception of motion, unless it brings a train of successive ideas ; as we learn from a calm at sea, when looking on the sun, sea, or ship, we perceive no motion in either, though it is certain that two of the bodies at least have moved a great way.

There seem to be certain bounds to the quickness and slowness of the succession of our Ideas : we cannot perceive the succession of a cannon ball on account of its quickness, nor of the hands of clocks,

or shadows of sun-dials on account of their slowness. We may call an *instant* that part of duration wherein we perceive no succession; or which takes up the time of only one idea in our minds. From my own experience, I think no one can keep one unvaried single idea a long time in his mind. The consideration of Duration as set out by certain periods and marked by certain measures or epochs, is that which most properly we call *time*. We cannot measure *duration* as we can *extension*, by the application of one part of it to another: nothing can serve well for a convenient *measure of time*, but what has the whole length of its duration divided into apparently equal portions, by constantly repeated periods: for this reason the annual and diurnal revolutions of the sun and moon have been the common measures. The distinction of *days* and *years* depending on the motion of the sun, some have falsely thought that *motion* and *duration* were the measure one of the other, and that *time* and *motion* had a necessary connexion: whereas any constant periodical appearance or alteration of ideas in equidistant spaces of duration, if constant and universally observable, would have served as well.

Duration in itself is to be considered as going on in one constant, equal, uniform course; but none of the measures of it which we can make use of can be known to do so: since no two portions of suc-

ession can be brought together, it is impossible certainly to know their equality.

Having got a *measure of time*, we can apply it to *duration*, antecedent to the existence of the measure itself; thus we can apply the measure of a year to *duration* before the creation. We may easily conceive the beginning of *motion*, but not of *duration*: and in our thoughts we may set limits to *body*, but not to *space*.

We get the Idea of *Eternity* by the same means as that of *Time*; having got the Idea of succession and duration we can in imagination add certain lengths of duration together as often as we please, without limit.

## CHAP. XV.

### OF DURATION AND EXPANSION CONSIDERED TOGETHER.

*DISTANCE* or *space*, abstractedly, I call *expansion*, to distinguish it from *extension*, which by some is only applied to matter: and I prefer *expansion* to *space*, because *Space* is often applied to distance of fleeting successive parts which never exist together,



as well as to those which are permanent. In *expansion* and *duration*, the mind has this common idea of continued lengths capable of greater or less quantities: having as clear an idea of the difference of length between an *hour* and a *day*, as between an *inch* and a *foot*. We can easily conceive the end of *extension* but not of *expansion*. It is arrogant to say, that beyond the bounds of body there is nothing; confining God within the limits of matter.—Though we easily admit *duration* boundless, as it certainly is, we cannot extend it beyond all being; we easily allow that God fills eternity; and why not, that he fills immensity? It is ascribing too much to matter, to say, where there is no body, there is nothing.—The idea of *infinite duration* is more easily admitted, than of *infinite expansion*; for we consider the first as an attribute of God; but (attributing extension only to matter, which is finite,) we are apt to doubt of the existence of expansion without matter, as if the confines of body and space were the same. The names of things may direct us to the origin of men's ideas; and from the term *duration*, one may suppose, that the continuation of existence, with a kind of resistance to destructive force, was thought to have some analogy to the continuation of solidity, which is apt to be confounded with hardness.—Hence *durare* and *durum esse*; that *durare* is applied to the idea of *hardness* as well as of *existence*, we see

in Horace, Ep. 16. *ferro duravit sæcula*.—Time in general is to *duration*, what *place* is to *expansion*; a landmark to denote the relative position of finite existences.—*Where* and *when* are questions belonging to all finite existences. Space and Duration have a great conformity in this,—that, though justly reckoned among our simple Ideas, yet none of the distinct ideas we have of either is without all manner of *composition*: it is the very nature of both to consist of parts; but their parts are all of the same kind, without the mixture of any other idea. The mind cannot as in number, come to an indivisible unit, or idea, and conceive space without parts; it therefore uses the common measures of *inches, feet, hours, days*, as simple ideas of which larger ones are compounded.—They agree also in this, that considered as having parts, yet their parts are not separable even in thought.—*Duration* is as a line, extended in *infinity*; not capable of variation or figure: *Expansion*, as a solid, admitting of straight lines through it in every direction. It is nearly as hard for us to conceive any real being without expansion as without duration; what spirits therefore have to do with space or how they communicate in it, we know not: we only know that each body possesses its proper portion, to the exclusion of all others.—*Duration*, is the idea we have of perishing distance, no two parts of which exist together: *Expansion* is the idea of

lasting distance, all the parts of which exist together. Though we cannot conceive duration without succession, that is, that the being of this moment is the being of any future one; yet we can conceive the eternal duration of the Almighty, because he has infinite knowledge even of things future.—The distinct ideas of *extension* and *duration* singularly combine, every part each being in every part of the other.

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## CHAP. XVI.

### OF NUMBER.

**NUMBER** is the simplest and most universal Idea we have. Every object of our senses, and thought of our minds, brings this idea with it. All our complex ideas of its modes are formed by the simple addition of the idea of Unity to itself: its modes therefore are the most distinct, each combination being as clearly distinct from that nearest to it as from the most remote: but in other simple modes two approaching ideas, though really different, are not easily distinguished; as is clear from the colour and extension of bodies, where real minute differences do not give us distinct ideas.

This distinctness of its modes makes the dem

strations of *Number* the most precise. Names or marks are particularly necessary to *number*, its modes being only combinations of units, which have no variety: for which reason people whose language is scanty, and accommodated only to a simple life, have no distinct ideas of large numbers, but express them by shewing their fingers, or the hair of their heads.

Number measures every thing capable of measurement: our idea of *infinity*, when applied to expansion and duration, seems nothing else but the repeated addition of parts of each without limit; whence the ideas of *Eternity* and *Immensety*.

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## CHAP. XVII.

### OF INFINITY.

**FINITE** and *infinite* seem to me to be considered by the mind as the *modes of quantity*, and primarily to be attributed to those things which are capable of increase or diminution; such are our ideas of *space*, *duration*, and *number*. God, indeed, is incomprehensibly infinite; we apply this idea primarily to his duration and ubiquity; and figuratively to his power, wisdom, goodness, and other attributes, which are properly inexhaustible and incomprehensible; we having no other idea of them, than that they will always exceed our utmost thoughts.

Obvious portions of extension affecting our senses give us the idea of *finite*. Our capacity to add together in thought any lengths of space gives us the idea of *infinity*. It is quite a different consideration whether the mind has the idea of such a boundless space actually existing; since our ideas are not always proof of the existence of things: but *space* being considered either as the extension of body, or as existing by itself without matter, the mind can never conceive an end to it.

By adding in our minds any lengths of duration, we get the idea of *Eternity*: but it is quite a different thing, whether the duration of any real being has been eternal.—It may be asked, why we do not attribute infinity to other ideas as well as those of space and duration? I answer; all those ideas which are considered as having parts, and capable of increase by addition, give the idea of infinity; but to the perfectest idea I have of *white*, I cannot add the idea of *whiter*; and to add the idea of a less degree of whiteness is only to diminish the idea.

It seems to me not an insignificant subtilty to distinguish between, *infinity of space*, and *space infinite*:—for our idea of infinity is an *endless, progressive idea*; but our idea of any *quantity* being necessarily *determinate* at the time, (for be it as great as it will, it can be no greater than it is,) to add infinity to it, is to adjust a standing measure to a growing bulk, and to suppose the mind to have a view of these re-

ideas of space which an endless repetition can totally represent ; which involves a plain conclusion. Our idea of infinity being properly only *negation of an end*, and consisting in a supposed *progression*, any idea of space, number, duration, however great, (being positive,) is contrary idea of infinity.

*Number* is not generally thought infinite, though *time* and *extension* are : for in number, we consider ourselves as at one end, as it were, of a line *extending* indeterminately forwards : but we consider *time* as a line extending both ways, the present *dividing* the part past from the part future : and in *extension* we consider ourselves, as it were, in the centre, *with* parts extending indeterminately from us on all

any bulk of matter our thoughts can never arrive at *ultimate* divisibility ; but this is like the indefinite *division* of an unit into fractions, not the infinite addition of units.

the notion of an Eternal wise Being, who had no beginning, is, I think, unavoidable by every thinking person who examines his own or any other existence.

They think that they have an idea of Eternity, but not of Infinite Space : owing, I imagine, to what they think it necessary to admit some eternal being, but apparently absurd to suppose body infinite ; so they forwardly conclude against infinite Space.

## CHAP. XVIII.

## OF OTHER SIMPLE MODES.

**TO** *slide, tumble, creep, dance, &c.* are words which give us immediately distinct ideas; which are only different modifications of motion.—Modes of motion answer those of extension: *swift* and *slow*, are ideas of motion, whose measures are composed of the distances of *time* and *space* put together: so they are complex ideas, comprehending time and space with motion.

Every articulate word is a different modification of sound: sounds modified by the composition of diversity of notes of different length make the complex idea of *tune*.—Modes of colour are very various; but being seldom considered apart from figure, as in painting, weaving, &c. they are commonly made up of ideas of divers kinds, as, *beauty, rainbow, &c.*—We have very few names for compounded *tastes*, and *smells*; they must therefore be left to experience.—In general those simple modes, which are considered but as different degrees of the same simple idea, have no distinct names: either because men wanted measures nicely to distinguish them, or because the knowledge of them would not be of general use.

reason I suppose to have been this;—The great  
 ornament of men being with men, the knowledge  
 of men, and their actions, and ways of signifying them,  
 most necessary; therefore ideas of actions were  
 easily modified, and our complex ideas of them re-  
 ceived names, in order that we might record, and  
 discourse of them without circumlocution.

That this is so, we may observe in many arts,  
 and for the sake of a short way to express their  
 thoughts, those concerned in them have invented  
 words for complex ideas, which are unintelligible to  
 men of the same language.

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## CHAP. XIX.

### OF THE MODES OF THINKING.

**THINKING** is the first of its actions which the mind  
 exemplifies. It perceives many modifications in it  
 whence receives distinct ideas.—The perception  
 accompanying an impression made on the body by  
 an external object, being distinct from all other mo-  
 difications of thinking, is called *sensation*:—The  
 idea recurring without an impression on the ex-  
 ternal sensory by the same object, is called *remem-*



*brance*:—If the mind recover the idea by laborious search, it is *recollection*:—If it be long attentively considered, it is *contemplation*:—When ideas float in the mind without regard, we call it (from the poverty of our language) by the French word, *reverie*:—When we notice ideas so as to register them in the memory it is *attention*:—When the mind considers an idea with such earnestness as to disregard the solicitation of all other ideas, we call it *intention*, or *study*.—*Sleep*, without dreaming, is rest from all these:—and the having of ideas in the mind (while the outward senses are stopped, so as not to receive outward objects with their usual quickness,) suggested by no external object, or known occasion, nor under the conduct of the understanding, is called *dreaming*:—may not dreaming with the eyes open be what we call *ecstasy*?

I have only given some few examples of this sort of ideas, and, and the mode of acquiring them; by which we see that the states of the mind in thinking are very different, from mere *observation* to extreme *intention*. This difference of *intention* and *remission* of the mind in thinking, every one, I think, must experience: in sleep you find the mind out of the reach of those motions made on the organs of sense; but in this retirement, it often retains a more loose and incoherent manner of thinking, called *dreaming*. I would hence conclude, since the mind can sensibly put on several degrees of thinking, at several times,

that *thinking* is the *action* and not the *essence* of the soul. For the operations of agents will easily admit of degrees; but the essences of things are not conceived capable of any such variation.

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## CHAP. XX.

### OF THE MODES OF PLEASURE AND PAIN.

OF the simple Ideas which we receive from sensation and reflection, *pain* and *pleasure* are two very considerable ones.—

The thoughts or perceptions of the mind, like the sensations of the body, exist sometimes simply, unaccompanied with either pleasure or pain. These like other simple ideas cannot be described, nor their names defined.

Things are *good* or *evil* only in reference to pleasure and pain.—We call *good*, whatever increases pleasure, or diminishes pain:—and *evil*, whatever increases pain, or diminishes pleasure.—By pleasure and pain I must be understood to mean of body or mind, as they are commonly distinguished; though in truth they be only different constitutions of the

mind, occasioned by bodily sensations, or mental perceptions.

Pleasure and pain, and their causes good and evil, are the hinges on which our passions turn: by observing their operations in us, we may form the ideas of our *passions*.

The idea of *Love* is a reflection on the thought of that delight which any present or absent thing is apt to produce.

*Hatred* is the thought of the pain which any present or absent thing is apt to produce.

*Desire* is the uneasiness felt on the absence of any thing, whose present enjoyment carries the idea of delight with it.—We may remark, by the bye, that the chief if not only spur to human industry is *uneasiness*: for where the absence of a proposed good creates no pain or endeavour after it, there is no desire of it, only a bare *velleity*, that is such a degree of desire as produces no exertion.

*Joy* is that delight occasioned by the possession or expectation of a good.

*Sorrow* is that uneasiness caused by a good lost, or an evil present.

*Hope* is that pleasure produced by the prospect of future enjoyment.

*Fear* is the pain produced by the thought of a future evil.

*Despair* is the thought of the unattainableness

of any good ; sometimes producing pain, sometimes indolence.

*Anger* is the uneasiness of the mind on the receiving of an injury, with a present purpose of revenge.

*Envy* is an uneasiness of the mind caused by the consideration of a good we desire, obtained by one whom we think not deserving of preference.—

These two last mentioned passions *envy* and *anger*, not being caused by pain or pleasure simply in themselves, but implying a mixed consideration of ourselves and others, are not found in all men, because estimations of merit or purposes of revenge are wanting in them.—All the rest, terminated purely in pleasure and pain, are universal. We love, desire, rejoice, and hope, only in respect of pleasure ; we hate, fear, and grieve, only in respect of pain ultimately : thus, we extend our hatred usually to the subject (if a voluntary agent) which has caused us pain ; because the fear it leaves is a constant pain : but we do not so constantly love what has done us good ; because pleasure does not operate so strongly on us as pain, and we are not so apt to expect the recurrence of a good.

Most of the passions commonly produce visible changes in the body ; but these not being always sensible, make no necessary part of the idea of each passion : for *shame*, an uneasiness of the mind on

the thought of something unbecoming, or which will lessen the esteem of others for us, does not always produce blushing.—I do not intend this as a discourse on the passions, but only to shew how these modes of pleasure and pain result from various considerations of good and evil.

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## CHAP. XXI.

### OF POWER.

THE idea of *power* is got by observing the alteration of simple ideas in external things, and the constant change of ideas in the human mind; concluding that for the future by the same ways like agents will produce like changes in the same things: thus we say, fire has a power to melt gold; and gold has a power to be melted: where the power we consider is in reference to the change of perceivable ideas: for we can only observe an alteration in any thing, by perceiving the change of its sensible ideas.

Power is twofold, as able to make, or able to receive any change: the first may be called *active*, the second *passive* power.—Perhaps matter may be wholly destitute of active power, as God is above all passive power; and the intermediate state of created spirits may be the only one capable of both.

Power includes in it some relation to action or change; and indeed what idea does not?—The ideas of extension, duration, and number, contain a secret relation of parts; those of figure and motion, much more visibly;—what are all sensible qualities, colours and smells, but the powers of bodies in relation to our perception?

The idea of power then may well be considered as a simple idea.—The idea of *action* agrees better with Power, than that of *passion*; since we never perceive a possibility to receive change, without looking for a power to produce it; but the operations of bodies on one another do not give us so clear an idea of this, as the operations of our own minds.—All power relates to action; but *thinking* and *motion* are the only sorts of action of which we have any idea. The idea of *thinking* is never got from *body*; only from *reflection*: nor have we any idea of the *beginning of motion* from *body*. A body at rest affords no idea of an *active power*, and when put in motion, that motion is rather a *passion* than an *action*. When one billiard ball communicates motion to another, it gives us but a very obscure idea of active power; for we observe it only to *transfer* a motion it had received, but not to *produce* any motion. We find in ourselves a power to begin or forbear, continue, or end several actions of our minds and motions of our bodies, barely by a thought or pre-

ference of the mind, commanding such a thing to be done or not: this power we call the *will*; its exercise, *volition* or *willing*: an action done or forborne by the command of the mind, is called *voluntary*; one performed without a thought of the mind, *involuntary*.

The power of perception we call the *Understanding*; it is of three sorts; 1st. The perception of ideas in our mind; 2d. The perception of the signification of signs; 3d. The perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas.—All these are attributed to the understanding, or perceptive power; though use allows us to say only, that we *understand* the two latter.

These powers of the mind, of *perceiving* and *preferring* are usually called two *faculties* of the mind, under the names *understanding* and *will*: we must take care that the term *faculties* does not mislead us into a notion of distinct agents in us with several provinces and authorities; for this has been the cause of much obscurity and wrangling.—The ideas of *Liberty* and *necessity* arise from the consideration of the power of the mind over the actions of the body to make it begin, continue, or end any action. A man is *free* so far as he can think or not, move or not, according to the preference of his mind: wherever performance or forbearance are not equally in a man's power, that is, will not follow the preference of his

mind, there he is *not free*, though the action may be voluntary : so that *Liberty* cannot be without *thought*, *volition*, and *will*; but these may all be without *Liberty*.

No one believes a tennis-ball in motion or at rest to be a free-agent, because it is not conceived to think, nor consequently to have any volition, or preference of motion or rest.—Where a man by a convulsive motion strikes himself or his friend, every one pities him as acting by *necessity*. *Liberty* is not an idea belonging to *volition*, or *preference*, but to the power of obeying the *directions* of the mind.—*Voluntary* is not opposed to *necessary* but to *involuntary*: for a man may prefer what he can do to what he cannot do, the state he is in to its change, though necessity has made it in itself unalterable.

It is with the thoughts of the mind as with the motions of body,—where ideas force themselves on the mind, so that it cannot help contemplating them, there the mind is not at liberty:—a man on the rack cannot lay aside the idea of pain, and divert himself with other contemplations.

Wherever *thought*, or the power of acting, or not, according to its directions, is wanting, there *necessity* takes place: to act contrary to the preference of his mind, in an agent capable of volition, is called *compulsion*. These considerations may, I think, put an end to that unreasonable, because unintelligible ques-



tion, "*Whether man's will be free or not.*" It is as insignificant to ask, whether a man's will be free, as whether his virtue be square; liberty being as little applicable to will, as squareness to virtue, for it is obvious that difference of figure belongs not to virtue, and equally plain that *liberty*, which is a power, belongs only to agents, and cannot be an attribute of the will, which is itself only a power. Such is the difficulty of giving clear notions of internal actions by words, that it must be observed, the terms *directing*, *preferring*, &c. will not distinctly enough express *volition* to one who does not reflect on what he does when he *wills*: for example, *preferring* does not precisely express the act of *volition*: a man may *prefer* flying to walking, yet we cannot say, he *wills* it. The *will* is nothing but a power, and *freedom* is only a power; so that, to ask if the will has freedom, is to ask if one power has another power: *powers* belong only to agents, and are *attributes* of *substances*, not of *powers*. The power to do one action is not operated on by the power of doing another action: The powers of Thinking and Choosing operate not on one another, any more than the powers of Dancing and Singing: an actual thought may indeed occasion a volition, and a tune a dance, but then it is not one power that operates on another; it is the mind that operates, and exerts these powers; it is the man that does the action: for powers are relations, not agents:

that which has the power to operate or not is free, and not the power itself, for freedom can only belong to what can act.

To talk of *faculties* operating as distinct agents tends nothing to advance our knowledge; not that I deny faculties both in the mind and body: but when we talk of the *digestive* faculty, the *motive* faculty, the *intellectual* and *elective* faculty, we can only mean that the *faculty*, *ability*, or *power* to move moved, to will willed, &c.

The proper question is not, "*Whether the will be free;*" but "*whether the man be free?*" As far then as a man can act according to the preference of his mind, so far he is free:—To prefer an action to its absence is to will it; and we cannot imagine any being freer than to be able to do what he *wills*. But man wishing to shift off all thought of guilt from himself, (though it be by putting himself into a worse state than that of fatal necessity,) pleads that he is not free at all, unless he is as free to will, as he is to act what he wills.—In respect of willing a man is not free; a man cannot at the same time prefer both the doing and the forbearance of an action; one or other must follow the determination of his will, and that which does follow is necessarily by the preference of his mind.

Considering the vast number of voluntary actions that succeed one another every moment we are awake,

in the course of our lives, there are but few that are thought on or proposed to the will, till the time they are to be done; in which with respect to willing the mind is not free. The *mind* then determines the *will*; and *satisfaction* in, or *uneasiness* under, any state or action is the motive which determines the *mind*.

Much obscurity has been occasioned by confounding *will* with several of the Affections, especially *desire*: whereas the *will*, or power of volition, is conversant about nothing but that particular determination of the mind, whereby barely by a thought the mind endeavours to give rise, continuation, or stop, to any action which it takes to be in its power: but in the very same action our *desire* may be quite contrary to our *will*: for instance; a man whom I cannot deny may oblige me to use persuasions to another, which at the time I am speaking I wish may not prevail: where it is plain that *will* and *desire* run counter; for I *will* the action that tends one way, and I *desire* the direct contrary.

I believe not that the *greater good*, (as is generally supposed) but that *present uneasiness* determines the will: we may call it *desire*, which is an uneasiness of the mind for want of some absent good:—all pain of body, and disquiet of mind is *uneasiness*, which is always joined with *desire*. The absent good desired in reference to pain is ease, the desire of which

is proportioned to, and inseparable from pain. As we desire any absent good so are we in pain for it; but absent good does not cause pain according to its value, for it may be contemplated even without desire.

We see that our all-wise maker, suitably to the constitution of our body and mind, has given us the uneasiness of hunger and thirst, and other natural desires, returning at their seasons, to move the will for the preservation and continuation of the species: for I think we may conclude, that if the bare contemplation of these good ends had been sufficient to determine the Will, we should have had none of those uneasinesses or pains which now operate on us, and perhaps in this world no pain at all.

Though I first thought otherwise, upon stricter enquiry I am forced to conclude, that the *greater good*, even when acknowledged to be so, does not determine the Will, unless it raise a proportionate desire. Convince a man ever so much of the advantages of penury over poverty, make him own that the handsome conveniences of life are better than nasty penury, yet while he is content with the latter, he will never be determined to any action that may mend his condition: Whence the sentence of that unhappy complainer is made good by constant experience, *video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*.

As we are capable but of one determination of the will to one action at once, the removal of the present uneasiness is the first step towards happiness. If the

*greater good* determined the Will, I do not see how so great good as the eternal condition of a future state once proposed should ever cease constantly to influence us to the pursuit of it. The *will* directing the thoughts and other actions would, if it were so, fix the mind on the contemplation of that good:—that it is not so, is visible in experience; the infinitely greatest good being neglected in order to satisfy the successive uneasiness of our desires pursuing trifles. Happiness, and that alone, moves desire: Happiness and Misery are two extremes, the bounds whereof we know not; the degrees of them I call *pleasure* and *pain*: Happiness then, in its full extent, is the utmost pleasure we are capable of, and Misery the utmost pain; the lowest degree of happiness is so much ease from all pain, and so much present pleasure, as one cannot be content without.

As *pleasure* and *pain* are produced in us by the operation of certain objects either on our minds or bodies, in different degrees, whatever is apt to produce pleasure, we call *good*; whatever produces pain, *evil*. Though whatever is apt to produce any degree of pleasure or pain, be in itself either good or evil, yet we frequently do not call either so in competition with a greater of its sort: for degrees of pleasure or pain have justly a preference, and every less degree of pain or greater degree of pleasure has the nature of good; and vice versa.

All present pain makes a part of our present misery: but all present good does not at any time make a necessary part of our present happiness, nor the absence of it of our misery: else, we should be infinitely miserable. A few degrees of pleasure suffice for happiness; and indeed in this life there are not many whose happiness reaches so far as to afford them a constant train of moderate mean pleasures, without any mixture of uneasiness; and yet they could be content to stay here for ever, though they allow the possibility of a future state of eternal durable joys.

By the due consideration and examination of a good proposed, we may raise our desires in a due proportion to the value of that good, so that it may work upon the will, and be pursued. The *greatest uneasiness* does not always determine the Will to the next action; for the Mind has a power to suspend the execution of any of its desires, and examine and compare the objects of them; in which consists man's *Liberty*; and from the wrong use of this liberty arise all the errors we run into in our endeavours after happiness. In this Liberty seems to consist what is improperly called *free will*. For during this suspension of a desire, before the will be determined to action, and the action (which follows that determination) be done, we can judge of the good or evil of what we are going to do; and upon due examina-

tion having judged, it is not a fault, but a perfection of our nature to desire, will, and act, according to the last result of a fair examination. It is as much a perfection, that desire or the power of preferring, should be determined by good, as that the power of acting should be determined by the will; and the more certain such determination is, the greater is the perfection. Nay, were we determined by any thing but the last result of our minds, judging of the good or evil of an action, we were not free; the very end of freedom being to attain the good we choose. To deny that a man's will in every determination follows his judgment, is to say that he wills and acts for an end that he would not have, at the very time that he wills and acts for it.

We have reason to suppose that superior beings are more steadily determined in their choice of good than we; and yet that they are not less happy, or less free. I think we may be allowed to say that God himself cannot chuse what is not good; the freedom of the Almighty hinders not his being determined by what is best. The constant desire of happiness, and the constraint it puts upon us to act for it, nobody I think accounts an abridgment of liberty, or at least such as to be complained of. God himself is under the necessity of being happy: and the more any intelligent being is so, the nearer is he to infinite perfection and happiness..

He that has a power to act or not, according to the determination of his judgment, is a *free agent*. He that has his chains knocked off, and the prison-doors set open to him, is perfectly at liberty, because he may either go or stay as he likes best; and he ceases not to be free, though his preference be absolutely determined to stay by the darkness of the night, illness of the weather, or want of other lodging.

The more strongly we are determined to the unalterable pursuit of happiness in general, the more are we free from any necessary determination of the will to a particular action. Whatever necessity determines the pursuit of real bliss, the same necessity establishes *suspense*, *deliberation*, and *scrutiny* of each successive desire. That the choices of men are so various and contrary, argues, not that they do not all pursue good, but that the same thing is not good to every man alike. The philosophers of old might as reasonably have enquired whether the best relish were to be found in apples, plumbs, or nuts, as whether the *Summum bonum* consisted in riches, bodily delights, virtue, or contemplation. The best relish is what best pleases each particular palate; the greatest happiness is in those things which produce to each the greatest pleasure: these in different men are very different things. If therefore men in this life only have hope and enjoyment, it is not unreason-



able that they should seek their happiness by avoiding all things that displease them, and pursuing all that delight them; for if there be no prospect beyond the grave, the inference is certainly right, "Let us eat and drink,—let us enjoy what we delight in—for to-morrow we die."

Men may choose different things, and yet all choose right, supposing them only like a company of poor insects,—some bees, delighted with the sweetness of flowers,—some beetles, delighted with other kinds of viands,—which having enjoyed for a season, they cease to be, and exist no more for ever.

Liberty plainly consists in a power to act according as we *will*: as this only comprehends actions consecutive to volition, it has been asked, *whether we are at liberty to will?*—I reply, that in most cases a man cannot forbear the act of volition; but that in choosing a remote good as an end to be pursued, he is at liberty with respect to *willing*; for he may suspend his choice for or against the thing proposed, till he has examined its nature, and probable consequences: but when he has once chosen it, it becomes a part of his happiness, excites desire, which proportionably gives him uneasiness, determines his will, and makes him act in pursuit of his choice.

Thus we see how a man may justly incur punishment, though in all the actions which he wills, he

necessarily follows his judgment; for by too hasty a choice he may impose on himself wrong measures of good and evil, which yet influence his conduct as if they were true: but the eternal law and nature of things must not be altered.—The question still remains,—*how men come to prefer the worse to the better?* To solve which, we must consider whence arise those *uneasinesses* that determine our voluntary actions:—Some originate in causes not in our power; as pains of body, from disease, or outward injury, the contemplation of future good not sufficing to raise such desires as may counterbalance the present uneasiness, and keep the will steady in the choice of virtuous actions:—others arise from our desires of absent good, which are proportionate to the judgment we form, and the relish we excite. When present happiness or misery are alone considered, independent of consequences, we never chuse amiss: Things in their present enjoyment are what they seem,—the apparent and real good are always the same: so that if every action were concluded within itself, and drew no consequences after it, we should infallibly prefer the best: were the pains of honest industry and starvation set together before us, no body could doubt which to chuse.

The measures of good and evil which govern our choice depend very much on the opinion we may form of a future state, in which our happiness or

misery will depend on our behaviour here. For as nothing of pleasure or pain in this life can bear any proportion to the happiness or misery of an immortal soul, we shall prefer an action not on account of the advantage it may produce here, but for its tendency to secure happiness hereafter.

To a creature endued with foresight, things are *good* or *bad* not only with respect to present pleasure or pain, but with regard also to our view of their remote consequences. Most of our unhappiness arises from the errors we make in comparing the present with the future: for as objects near our view are apt to be thought greater than remote ones of a larger size, so in the pleasures and pains, those which are future generally have the disadvantage in the comparison: for small matters in possession we part with great ones in reversion. We are very prone to deceive ourselves by imagining that the probabilities of things future cannot amount to any thing like certainty. Since a Future Life is at least possible, a preference of vice to virtue is manifestly a wrong judgment.

Before I conclude this chapter, I will say a few words more on *Liberty*, and the two sorts of action, *motion*, and *Thinking*.

Some place Liberty in *Indifferency* antecedent to the determination of the will; I wish they had informed us whether this indifferency too was antec-

to the judgment of the Understanding :—for determination of the will immediately follows the assent of the understanding ; and to place liberty in indifference previous to the judgment of the will, is placing it in a state of which we know nothing.—Not minding the phrase, I will consent to that liberty is placed in *indifferency* ; but then it remains after the determination of the will ; and it is not of the man, but of his operative powers ; he having the same capability before as after the determination of the will, may be said to be in a state of indifferency. I have the ability to move my hand, or not,—and so am free : my will determines the operative power to rest, and I am still free ; the indifferency of that my operative power to move or not still remains, for my will might have decided the contrary : but if my hand be seized with a clasp, the indifferency of the operative power is destroyed, and with it Liberty.

*Notion* and *thinking*, though called actions, are always perfectly so : for where a substance that receives a notion or thought receives the impression purely without, and acts merely by its capacity to resist such impression, such a power is not properly an action, but only a *passive capacity*.

## CHAP. XXII.

## OF MIXED MODES.

*MIXED* modes are complex ideas consisting of several combinations of simple ideas of different kinds; as *obligation*, *drunkenness*, *lie*. I call them Mixed Modes to distinguish them from the more simple modes, which consist only of simple ideas of the same kind. *Mixed Modes* are not marks of real beings, but combinations of independent ideas, and thereby distinguished from Complex Ideas of substances.

In receiving its simple ideas the mind is passive; but in these combinations it often exercises an active power: for it can compound its simple ideas, without examining whether they exist together in nature or not. Hence they are called *notions*, as existing in thought, not in reality; though several of them may be taken from observation: for the idea of *Hypocrisy* might have been formed from the observation of one who made a shew of good qualities which he had not; or in the mind only, without such a pattern to fashion it by: since in the beginning of languages and societies among men, several complex ideas must have been in their minds, and in use, and

so the ideas framed, before the combinations they stood for ever existed.

*Complex ideas* may be acquired by explaining the terms that stand for them ; thus the ideas of *sacrilege* or *murder* may be got by an enumeration of the simple ideas they comprehend, without seeing either of them committed.—A *mixed mode* receives its unity, that is, its quality of being considered as one idea, from the name, which always represents such a combination : thus, though there is no reason in nature, why the *killing of an old man* should not be a complex idea, as well as the *killing of one's father*, (which we call *parricide*) ; yet not having a precise name, it is not considered as a species of action distinct from that of killing any other man. The reason of making *mixed modes* is to communicate our thoughts with dispatch : where combinations of particular ideas can seldom happen, the trouble of enumerating the simple ideas is preferable to that of loading the memory with names of complex ideas. Hence it is that there are in every language many particular words which cannot be rendered by any one single word of another, according to the customs and manners of each nation : (as *οὐρανισμος* among the Greeks,—*proscriptio*, among the Romans.) Hence too the same language is constantly varying, according to the combinations of ideas which new customs and opinions bring with them : the words *reprieve*

and *appeal* stand for ideas which could not be enumerated without a long periphrasis.

There are three ways by which we get the *complex ideas of mixed modes*. 1. By experience, and observation of things themselves: thus by seeing two men wrestle, we get the idea of *wrestling*. 2. By invention, or voluntarily putting together several simple ideas in our own minds: so the first inventor of *printing* or *etching* had an idea of it in his mind, before it ever existed. 3. By explaining the names of *actions we never saw*, or *notions we cannot see*, and setting before our imaginations all those ideas which compose them. All our complex ideas are ultimately resolvable into simple ones, though perhaps their immediate ingredients are also complex ideas: thus the mixed mode which the word *lie* stands for, is composed of these simple ideas—1. articulate sounds—2. Certain ideas in the mind of the speaker—3. Words the signs of those ideas—4. Those signs put together by affirmation or negation, otherwise than the ideas they stand for in the mind of the speaker.

The simple ideas which have been most modified, are those of *thinking*, *motion*, and *power*: the two first comprehend all action; and the last is that from which these actions are conceived to flow.—Action being the great business of life, men must have settled names of the modes of action, distinguished

by their causes, means, objects, ends, instruments, time, place, &c. and also of powers fitted for each action:—the power or ability of doing any thing, acquired by frequently doing the same thing, we call *habit*: a readiness on every occasion to do a particular thing, we call *disposition*. If we examine any mode of action,—viz: *consideration* and *assent*, (actions of the mind)—*running* and *speaking*, (actions of the body)—*revenge* and *murder*, (actions of both together,) we find them so many collections of simple ideas united in complex names.

*Power* being the source whence all action proceeds, the substances wherein these powers are, when putting them in action, are called *causes*; and the substances thereby produced, or the simple ideas introduced into any subject by the exertion of that power, are called *effects*.—The efficacy in the subject producing the new substance or idea is called *action*; the simple idea changed or produced in the subject operated on is called *passion*. Many words which seem to express some action, signify nothing of the mode of operation, but barely the effect, with some circumstances of the subject wrought on, or of the cause operating; thus, *creation*, *annihilation*, contain no idea of action or manner of production, but barely of the cause and the thing done:—when we say, the cold freezes water; though *freezing* seems to import some action, yet it is nothing but



an effect; and contains no idea of the action whereby what was fluid is become hard.

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## CHAP. XXIII.

### OF THE COMPLEX IDEAS OF SUBSTANCES.

WE observe several simple ideas constantly to go together; and presuming them to be united in one subject, we call them so united (for the sake of dispatch) by one name. We are apt afterwards inadvertently to consider this complication of many ideas together as one simple idea; for not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist of themselves, we suppose some *substratum* from which they result, and which therefore we call *substance*: so that our notion of pure substance in general is only a supposition of we know not what support of such qualities as are capable of producing simple ideas in us; which qualities are commonly called *accidents*. If we enquire in what colour or weight inhere;—the only answer is in solid extended parts: and if we ask in what solidity and extension inhere;—we can only reply in *something*; that is, we know not what; and have no distinct idea about it.

Our Ideas of particular substances are acquired by

our observation of those simple ideas which we find constantly combined together; these we suppose to flow from the internal constitution, or unknown essence of the substance. The ordinary qualities observable in a *man*, a *horse*, *gold*, a *diamond*, put together make the true complex idea of those substances: so in speaking of any sort of substance, we say it is a *thing* having such or such qualities; as, *body is a thing having extension, figure, and capability of motion*;—*spirit is a thing capable of thinking*:—thus we always suppose the substance something besides the extension, figure, motion, thinking, or other observable ideas, though we know not what it is.

We have as clear an idea of *spiritual substance* or *spirit*, as we have of *corporeal substance* or *matter*; the first being supposed (without knowing what it is) the substratum of those operations we experiment within ourselves, as *thinking, knowing, doubting, fearing*; and the last supposed (with equal ignorance of what it is) the substratum of those simple Ideas we have from without.—He has the perfectest idea of any substance who has gathered and put together most of those simple Ideas which exist in it; among which are to be reckoned its active powers and passive capacities; which, though not simple ideas, yet in this respect, for brevity sake, may be reckoned among them: thus, *the power of drawing iron* is

one of the ideas in the complex one of the substance called *loadstone*: and a *power to be so drawn* is a part of the complex one called *iron*: which powers pass for inherent qualities in those subjects. We acquire ideas of the *heat* and *colour* of Fire *immediately*; and perceiving the colour and brittleness of charcoal, we *mediately* discover another *power* which it has, to change the *colour* and *consistency* of wood. Though these *powers* considered in themselves, are truly *complex ideas*, yet as they must be considered as parts of our *more complex ideas* of several substances, I beg leave in this looser sense to have all these *potentialities* considered as *simple ideas*:—for our senses not enabling us to discover the *primary qualities* of bodies, on which their real constitutions and differences depend, we are obliged to distinguish them by their *secondary qualities*, which, as has been shown, are nothing but powers.—

The Ideas that make our complex ones of corporeal substances are of these three sorts:—1st, The Ideas of the primary qualities of things, which are discovered by our senses, and are in them even when we perceive them not; such are the bulk, figure, number, situation, and motion of the parts of bodies, which are really in them whether we take notice of them or not.—2dly, The sensible secondary qualities, which, depending on these, are nothing but the powers those substances have to produce

everal ideas in us by our senses; which ideas are not in the things themselves, otherwise than as any thing is in its cause.—3dly, The aptness we consider in any substance to give or receive such alterations of primary qualities, as that the substance so altered should produce in us different ideas from what it did before; these are called active and passive powers; all which powers, as far as we have any notion of them, terminate only in sensible simple ideas.

Could we discover the minute particles of bodies and the real constitution on which their sensible qualities depend, I doubt not they would produce quite different ideas in us: for when we augment the acuteness of our senses by microscopes, what to the naked eye produces a certain colour appears through them quite a different thing:—thus sand or pounded glass, which is opaque and white to the naked eye, is pellucid in a microscope; and blood, which to the naked eye appears all red, by a good microscope shews only some few globules of red, swimming in a pellucid liquor.

The infinitely wise contriver of us and all things about us, hath fitted our senses, faculties, and organs, to the conveniences of life and the business we have to do here. Were our senses altered, and made much quicker and acuter, the appearance and outward scheme of things would have quite another face to us; and I am apt to think, would be inconsistent with our

being, or at least our well-being, in this part of the universe which we inhabit. If our sense of hearing were but 1000 times quicker than it is, how would a perpetual noise distract us.

I shall here propose an extravagant conjecture;—that since we have some reason (if any credit be due to the report of things that our philosophy cannot account for) to imagine that spirits can assume to themselves bodies of different bulk, figure, and conformation of parts;—whether one great advantage some of them have over us may not lie in this,—that they can so frame and shape to themselves organs of sensation or perception as to suit them to their present design, and the circumstances of the object they would consider.

We have no clear idea of substance; but we suppose a something to support those *ideas* we call *accidents*: therefore joining several ideas, as *thinking*, *willing*, *the power of beginning motion*, &c. to substance, we have as clear an idea of an *immaterial spirit*, as we have of a *material body* by joining together the ideas of coherent solid parts, power of being moved, &c.—Every act of sensation duly considered, gives us an equal view of the corporeal and spiritual parts of nature: I am as much convinced of an immaterial being within me to receive sensations, as I am of corporeal external objects creating them.—We suppose *body* to communicate motion

by *impulse*; *spirit* by *thought*: conceiving that spirits cannot operate but where they are, I attribute change of place to all finite spirits:—*motion* cannot be attributed to God, not because he is an immaterial, but because he is an infinite spirit.—We may conjecture that created spirits are not totally separate from matter, because they are both active and passive: *Pure spirit* (God,) is only active; *pure matter* only passive.—

Now let us compare *body* and *spirit*:—the substance of spirit is unknown to us;—and the substance of body equally unknown: we have clear ideas of two primary qualities of Body, *coherency of solid parts*, and *impulse*;—and likewise of two primary properties of Spirit, *thinking*, and *a power of action*: we have distinct ideas of several qualities in bodies;—and so we have of several modes of thinking, as, *believing, doubting, fearing, hoping*. Can there be any thing more perplexed, or nearer a contradiction in our notion of *spirit*, than is included in the very notion of *body*—the infinite divisibility of any finite extension,—involving in it consequences impossible to be explicated or made consistent with our apprehensions.

It is no more a contradiction that *thinking* should exist independent of *solidity*, than that *solidity* should exist independent of thinking;—and we can as easily conceive Thinking to exist without *matter*, as we

can how matter should think. Whether the complex idea of *body* or of *spirit*, be clearest, the simple ideas that compose them are only received from sensation or reflection; as is our idea of God himself: for having got the ideas of existence and duration, of knowledge and power, of pleasure and happiness, with several other qualities and powers which it is better to have than be without, we enlarge each with the idea of infinity, and putting them together make our complex idea of God.—

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#### CHAP. XXIV.

##### OF THE COLLECTIVE IDEAS OF SUBSTANCES.

THE mind by its power of composition, uniting several distinct substances into one idea, forms *complex collective ideas*; such are our ideas of an *army*, a *swarm*, a *city*, a *fleet*, &c. each of which collective ideas is as easily conceived to be one particular idea as our complex idea of any substance.—Almost all artificial things, at least such as are made up of distinct substances, are collective ideas; and if we rightly consider these collective ideas, *army*, *constellation*, *universe*, we shall find them to be artificial draughts of the mind, bringing remote and indepen-

dent things into one view, uniting them in one conception, and signifying them by one name, in order the better to contemplate and discourse of them.—

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## CHAP. XXV.

### OF RELATION.

THE understanding, in considering any thing, is not confined to that precise object; but can look beyond it to see how it stands in conformity to any other.—The bringing two distinct things together, and carrying your view from one to the other is *relation*: the denominations given to positive things, indicating the respect they bear to each other, are called *relatives*; and the things compared are called *related*.

My idea of Caius merely as a man is positive; when I call him *husband*, I produce the idea of relation to some other person: if I call him *white*, the idea is merely *positive*; but if I name him *whiter* it is relative. As any idea may occasion the mind to compare two things together, any idea may be the foundation of relation.—

Relations when expressed by *correlative terms*, are very obvious; as, *father and son*,—*bigger and*



*less,—cause and effect* : where correlative terms are wanting, relations are not so easily perceived ; hence many names which evidently include relation have been considered as external denominations : *concubine* is no doubt a relative name as well as *wife*. Every name expresses either some idea existing in the thing denominated, and is then *positive* ; or the idea the mind has of it compared with something distinct from it, and then is *relative*.

Some terms which seem to signify something absolute in the subject, yet conceal a tacit relation ; as *old, great, imperfect*. Ideas of relation may be the same in men who have very different ideas of the things related ; for they who have very different ideas of a *man* may agree in the notion of a *father*. A change of relation may take place without any change in the subject ; thus Caius whom to day I consider as a father, ceases to be so to morrow only by the death of his son.—Our ideas of relations are often clearer than of the subjects related : the notion we have of a *father* is more distinct than that of a *man* ; the notion of a *friend* more distinct than of *God* : because the knowledge of one action, or one simple idea, is often sufficient to give me the notion of a relation ; but an accurate collection of sundry ideas is necessary to the knowing of any substantial being.

## CHAP. XXVI.

## CAUSE AND EFFECT AND OTHER RELATIONS.

e notice our senses take of the constant vicissitudes of things, we cannot but observe that several kinds of substances begin to exist; and that they derive this their existence from the due application or operation of some other being:—hence we get an idea of *cause* and *effect*. What produces any thing we call *cause*; and what is produced *effect*: depending that a certain degree of heat produces a softness in wax, we call the simple idea *heat* the *cause*, and the softness the *effect*, each in relation to the other. When any thing is wholly made new, which had no existence, it is called *creation*: When any thing is produced by the insensible operation of the power of matter which all existed before, it is called *generation*: When the cause is extrinsical, and the effect produced by a sensible separation, or junction of discernible parts, we call it *making*; and all artificial things: and when any simple thing is produced which was not in a subject before, we call it *alteration*: thus, a Man is *generated*, a stone is *made*, and either is *altered* when any new quality or simple idea is produced in them.—

Time and Place are the foundations of very large relations: thus all words answering to the questions *how long? when?* express relations; importing the relation of one duration to some other, or shewing the distance of any point of time from the period of a longer duration, from which we measure, and to which we thereby consider it as related.—*Young* and *Old* are ordinarily thought to stand for positive ideas, though in fact they intimate the relation any thing has to a certain length of duration whereof we have an idea in our minds; thus having the idea of the ordinary duration of a man to be 70 years, we say a man is *young*, when he has lived but a small part of that time, and *old*, when his duration has almost reached the end of that which men do not usually exceed:—We call a man young at 20 years, very young at 7; but a horse old at 20 years, and a dog old at 7; because we compare their ages to different ideas of duration, which are settled in our minds as belonging to these animals in the ordinary course of nature.—There are also many obvious relations of Place and Extension, with many others; as, *far* and *near*, *great* and *little*, *weak* and *strong*, which we signify by names called Positive. Abundance of words in ordinary speech stand for relations which at first sight seem to have no such signification; as when we say, The ship has *necessary stores*; where *necessary* and *stores* are relative words; the first having relation to

the accomplishing of the voyage intended, and the other to future use.—

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## CHAP. XXVII.

### OF IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY.

**THE** mind often compares the very being of things ; when considering any thing as existing at any determined time and place, we compare it with itself existing at another time, and thereon form the ideas of *identity* and *diversity*. When we see any thing in any place at one instant of time, we are sure it is not another thing existing at that same instant of time in another place, however like in every respect : and in this consists *identity*, that the ideas attributed to it vary not at all from what they were that moment wherein we consider their former existence, and to which we compare the present : hence it follows that two things of the same kind cannot exist at the same instant in the same place, nor one and the same thing in different places.

We have ideas but of three sorts of substances, God, Finite Intelligencies, and Bodies.—1st, God is without beginning, eternal, unalterable, and every where ; concerning his identity therefore there can be no doubt. 2dly, Finite spirits having had each its

determinate time and place of beginning to exist, the relation to that time and place will always determine to each of them its identity, as long as it exists.—3dly, The same will hold of every particle of matter, which suffering no addition or subtraction of matter it is the same. Though these three sorts of substances do not exclude one another out of the same place: yet we cannot conceive but that they must necessarily each of them exclude any of the same kind out of the same place; else the notions and names of identity and diversity would be in vain, and there could be no distinction of substances one from another.

There can be no doubt of the diversity of the actions of finite beings, viz. *motion* and *thought*; because consisting in a continued train of succession, each perishing the moment it begins, they cannot exist in different times or in different places, as permanent beings can at different times exist in distant places.

We may now easily discover the so much enquired after *principium individuationis*: for it is plainly *existence* itself which determines a being of any sort to a particular time and place incommunicable to two beings of the same kind. The Identity of a mass of matter depends on the existence of the same number of particles or atoms united together, however confused: the Identity of living creatures is different, where the variation of great parcels of matter alters

not the identity: an oak growing from a plant to a great tree is still the same oak; and a colt grown up to a horse, at one time fat, at another lean, is still the same horse; though in both these cases there may be a manifest change of the parts: an oak then is the same plant, as long as it partakes of the same life, though communicated to new particles of matter, vitally united to the living plant, in a continued organization conformable to that sort of plants.

The Identity of man consists in a participation of the same continued life by constantly fleeting particles of matter, in succession vitally united to the same organized body; for if the *identity of soul* alone makes the *same man*, (and there be nothing in the nature of matter why the same individual spirit may not be united to different bodies,) it will be possible that those men, living in distant ages and of different tempers, may have been the same man: but this would be a strange use of the word Man, applied to an idea out of which *body* and *shape* is excluded. Unity of substance will not determine identity in every case; but to conceive of it rightly, we must consider what the idea is to which we apply it; for if the names *person*, *man*, and *substance* stand for three different ideas, the identity of each must be different.

Our idea of *man* is of an animal of a certain form; for whoever should see a creature of his own shape and make, though possessing no more reason than a

parrot, would still call him a man; and whoever should hear a parrot discourse and reason would still only think it a parrot. If then the idea of a Man be not merely of a rational being, but also of a body so and so shaped, the same successive body not shifted all at once must, as well as the same immaterial spirit, go to the making of the *same man*.

*Person* stands for a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places; which it does by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and essential to it. We cannot see or hear, meditate or will, without knowing that we do so: *consciousness* always accompanying our perceptions makes each person distinguish himself from all other thinking things; and in this alone consists *personal identity*, i. e. the sameness of a rational being: as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person.

Our consciousness being frequently interrupted, by forgetfulness, by such an intent regard to our present thoughts as prevents our reflecting on our past selves and by sound sleep, (when we have either no thoughts or no consciousness of them,) doubts are raised whether we are *the same thinking thing*, i. e. the same substance or not; which however reasonable, concern not *personal identity* at all: the question

ing what makes the same *person*, not whether the identical *substance* always thinks in the same person; for this matters not: different substances by the same *consciousness* (where they partake in it) being united into one *person*; just as different bodies of the same *life* are united into one *animal*,—where the change of substances the *identity* is preserved, the unity of a continued life.

By placing Identity of person in *consciousness*, we may easily conceive the same person at the resurrection, whether or not his body be in make or parts the same as he had here;—for whether the substance be the same, material, or immaterial, whatever has the consciousness of present and past actions, however remote in time, is the same person to whom they both belong;—and in this personal identity is founded the justice of reward and punishment. If it be possible for the same man to have distinct incommunicable consciousnesses at different times, without doubt the same man would at different times make different persons; which we see is the sense of mankind in the most solemn declaration of their opinions; human laws not punishing the mad man for the sober man's actions, nor the sober man for what the madman did,—thereby making them two persons.—But, it may be asked, why a sober man is punished for an act committed when drunk, of which he is not conscious; or why a man that walks in his sleep is an-



swerable for any mischief he may do in it?—Human Laws punish both with a justice suitable to their knowledge; because in these cases they cannot certainly distinguish what is real from what is counterfeit; for though punishment be annexed to personality, and personality to consciousness, yet the drunkard suffers because the fact is proved against him, but want of consciousness cannot be proved for him.—I incline to the opinion that Consciousness is the affection of one individual immaterial substance.

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## CHAP. XXVIII.

### OF VARIOUS RELATIONS.

ONE simple idea frequently exists in different degrees in different subjects; the *relations* depending on the equality and excess of the same simple idea in several subjects may be called *proportional*; as, whiter, sweeter, bigger, equal, more, &c.

— Secondly, things are frequently compared with respect to their origin; and the relations depending hereon are as lasting as the subjects to which they belong; as, father and son, brothers, cousins, countrymen, &c; which I call *natural*.

Thirdly, the foundation of considering the relation

s in some act whereby any one acquires a right, power, or obligation to do something; general, an army, a citizen, a patron, a client, or, &c. these I call *instituted*.

thly, the conformity or disagreement of men's actions with some rule by which they are of is the foundation of those relations we call human actions, when with their causes, ends, circumstances framed into distinct complex ideas, many mixed modes, of which a great part are annexed to them; thus supposing *gratitude* to be a readiness to acknowledge and return what is received,—*Polygamy* to be the having of more wives than one at once; when we frame these thus in our minds, we have so many determinations of mixed modes. Good and Evil (as is shewn in chap. 20, 21.) are nothing but pleasure or pain, or that which occasions pleasure to us: moral good and evil then is only the conformity or disagreement of our voluntary actions to the Law, whereby good or evil is drawn on by the will and power of the Law-maker; which good or evil, pleasure or pain, attending our obedience or breach of the Law by the decree of the Law-maker, is what we call reward and punishment. These moral rules there seem to be three sorts, under three different enforcements; for since it would be absurd to suppose a rule set to the free actions of

man, without some enforcement of good or evil annexed to determine his will, wherever we suppose a Law, we must also suppose some reward or punishment annexed to it: it would be vain to set rules to the actions of men unaccompanied by any enforcement independent of their natural consequences? and this is the true nature of all Law, (properly so called:) for a natural convenience or inconvenience would operate of itself without any law.

The Laws to which men generally refer their actions, in order to judge of their rectitude or obliquity, seem to me to be these three :

1st, The Divine Law; by which they are judged sins, or duties :

2d, The Civil Law; by which they are deemed criminal, or innocent :

3d, The Law of Opinion; by which they are considered virtuous or vicious.

By the Divine Law I mean that Law which God has set to the actions of men, whether promulgated to them by the Law of nature or the voice of revelation: the existence and fitness of such a Law I think no one can deny; it is the only true touchstone of moral rectitude.

The Civil Law is the rule set by the commonwealth to the actions of those that belong to it.

Philosophical Law, or the Law of opinion, is the approbation or dislike, praise or blame, which by a

ret and tacit consent establishes itself in the several societies of men, whereby several actions find credit or disgrace among them, according to the judgment, axioms, or fashions of that place.

Virtue and Vice are names pretended and supposed every where to stand for actions in their own name right or wrong; and when really so applied are incident with the divine Law above mentioned: it is however visible that these names *virtue* and *vice* are constantly attributed only to such actions as are in reputation or discredit in each country. That *opinion* or *reputation* is the common measure of virtue and vice will appear to any one who considers that what is in one country is accounted a vice, is in another country sought a virtue, or at least deemed innocent: yet every where virtue and praise, vice and blame go together: *Virtue* then is every where that which is sought *praise-worthy*. Virtue and praise are so united that they are often called by the same name: *Sunt ut præmia laudi*. Virgil.—*Nihil habet natura præstantius quàm honestatem, quàm laudem, quàm dignitatem, quàm decus*. Cicero. Which he tells us are all names for the same thing. As nothing can be more natural than to esteem that wherein every one finds his advantage, and nothing more visibly advances the general good of men in this world than the Law of God, it is no wonder that virtue and praise should every where correspond in a great mea-

sure with the unchangeable rule of right which that Law establishes :—even the approbation of bad men is frequently right :—and inspired teachers have not feared to appeal to common repute ; “ Whatsoever is lovely, Whatsoever is of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, &c.” Phil. iv. 8.

It may be imagined that I have forgotten my own notion of a Law, in grounding it on the consent of private men, who want a power to enforce it: but he is little skilled in the nature or history of man who fancies that commendation and disgrace are not strong motives on men to accommodate themselves to the opinions and rules of those with whom they converse; since he shall find that they chiefly govern men; who little regard the laws of God or of the magistrate, so they keep themselves in reputation with their company.—Most men seldom reflect seriously on the Laws of God: and many of those that do, while they break the law, entertain hopes of future reconciliation: the punishments of the magistrate they frequently hope to escape: but no one, having the least sense of a man, can bear to live in society under the constant ill opinion of his familiars; and he never escapes their censure if he offends against their opinion.

It is easy to observe the relation that any action hath to the rule, whether it be the fashion of the country, or the will of a law-maker: the conformity

ction with the rule is called *moral rectitude*.  
 e is only a collection of several simple ideas;  
 action may conform to the rule, it is only  
 y that the simple ideas belonging to it should  
 and to those which the law requires. If we  
 the particulars of the complex idea, *murder*,  
 find them to be a collection of simple ideas  
 from sensation or reflection: 1st.—From re-  
 on the operations of our minds, we have the  
*willing, considering, purposing before hand,*  
*or wishing ill to another*; and also, of *life,*  
*ption, and self motion*. 2dly. From sensa-  
 have the *collection of those simple sensible*  
*rich* are to be found in a man, and of *some*  
*whereby* we put an end to perception and mo-  
 he man; all which simple ideas are compre-  
 in the word *murder*: finding this collection of  
 deas agree or disagree with the esteem of the  
 I have been bred in, I call the action *vir-*  
*vicious*; making the will of a supreme invi-  
 v-maker my rule, I call it *good or evil, sin*  
 ; or comparing it with the civil Law of the  
 I call it *lawful or unlawful, a crime or not*.  
 actions are to be considered in two ways;  
 ctions of simple ideas, (which I call mixed  
 such as *drunkenness, lying*, which are as  
 ositive ideas as any of our most simple ideas;  
 ood, bad, or indifferent; and in this respect

they are relative, being compared with some rule: thus, the challenging and fighting with a man, being an action distinguished from all others by particular ideas, is called *duelling*; which considered in relation to the Law of God, is *sin*,—to the Law of Fashion, in some countries, *valour* and *virtue*,—to the Municipal Laws of some governments, a *capital crime*. The distinction between the names of the *positive mode* and the *relation* is as obvious as in substances; where one name, *man*, signifies the thing; and another, *father*, denotes the relation. The denominations of actions often mislead us, when no distinction is made between the positive idea of the action, and the reference it has to a rule: thus the taking from another his own without his knowledge or allowance, is properly called *stealing*; but that name commonly signifying both the moral pravity of the action, and its contrariety to the law, men are apt to condemn whatever is called *stealing* as an ill action: yet the taking away his sword from a madman to prevent mischief, though properly called *stealing*, as the name of a mixed mode, when compared with the law of God, is not a sin or transgression. All relations terminate in simple ideas; for when a man says “honey is sweeter than wax”—it is plain his thoughts in this relation terminate in the simple idea, *sweetness*. We have ordinarily at least as clear a notion of the relation as of its foundation: if I know what it is for

one man to be born of a woman, so do I know what it is for another to be born of the same woman ; and thus I have perhaps a clearer notion of a *brother*, than I have of a *birth*: but relative words, only denoting ideas existing in men's minds, are frequently of uncertain signification, as men will apply them differently. Measuring by a wrong rule, I may judge amiss of the moral rectitude of an action, though I am not mistaken in the relation it bears to the rule.

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#### CHAP. XXIX.

##### OF CLEAR AND DISTINCT, OBSCURE AND CONFUSED IDEAS.

WE shall best understand what is meant by *clear* and *obscure* in our ideas, by reflecting on what we call clear and obscure in the objects of sight. Light being that which discovers to us visible objects, we give the name of *obscure* to that which is not placed in a light sufficient to discover minutely to us the figure and colours which are observable in it:—in like manner our simple ideas are *clear* when they are such as the objects themselves, whence they were taken, did or might, in a well-ordered sensation or perception, present them : while the memory retains



them thus, and can produce them to the mind, they are *clear ideas*; when they want any thing of their original exactness, they are *obscure*.—Complex ideas are clear, when the ideas that compose them are clear, and in their number and order determinate and certain.

The causes of obscurity in simple ideas seem to be either dull organs, or very slight and transient impressions made by the objects, or else a weakness in the memory, not able to retain them as received: so wax may be too hard to receive an impression, too soft to retain it, or be impressed with a force not sufficient to make a clear impression.

A *clear idea*, then, is that whereof the mind has such a full and evident perception, as is received from an outward object operating duly on a well disposed organ.—A *distinct idea* is that wherein the mind perceives a difference from every other:—and a *confused idea* is one not sufficiently distinguishable from another from which it ought to be different. But it may be said that no idea can be any other than such as the mind perceives it to be, and that the very perception of it sufficiently distinguishes it from all others, so that it will be hard to find any where a confused idea.—In answer to which, it must be observed, that the confusion lies in the names; distinct names being supposed always to denote different things. The faults which occasion confusion are chiefly these: Complex ideas,

(which are most liable to confusion) being made up of too few simple ones, and such only as are common to other things; thus, he that has an idea made up of simple ones only, of *a beast with spots*, has but a confused idea of a *leopard*; it not being sufficiently distinguished from a *lynx*, and several other spotted beasts:—Our simple ideas being jumbled together in a disorderly manner; as in a picture, where the colours make very unusual figures, which appear to represent no particular object, but which when placed in a proper light shews the colours and lines in a due order and proportion, so that you discover the object it represents:—and the using of terms with no precise signification, so that the same term at different times stands for very different ideas.

Where there are supposed two different ideas, marked by two different names, which are not as distinguishable as the sounds that stand for them, there never fails to be confusion: to prevent this, we should unite in our complex idea, as precisely as possible, all those ingredients whereby it is differenced from others, and steadily apply the same name to them so united in a determinate number and order: but this not accommodating men's ease or vanity, nor serving any design but that of naked truth, which is not always the thing aimed at, such exactness is rather to be wished than hoped for. Our complex ideas may be very clear and distinct in one part, and very

obscure and confused in another: our idea of a *chiliaedron*, or figure of 1000 sides, may be very confused, though our idea of the number may be very distinct; for it is plain our idea of the figure is not so precise as that we could distinguish it from a figure with 999 sides; whereas while we confine our reasoning to the number of sides, we can argue distinctly about them;—as, that the sides of the one may be divided into two equal numbers, and not those of the other: but if one of these bodies was made into a cube, and the other into a figure of 5 sides, we could then distinguish them by their bare figure. In our reasonings concerning Eternity, or any other Infinite, we are apt to involve ourselves in manifest absurdities, for though we may have clear ideas of great lengths of duration, yet we can have no precise idea of a duration where we suppose no end.—In matter we have no clear ideas of the smallness of parts much beyond the smallest that occur to our senses; and so when we talk of the infinite divisibility of matter, we have only clear and distinct ideas of what *division* and *divisibility* in general or abstractly are, and of the relation of *whole* and *part*.—Nothing finite bears any proportion to infinite, and therefore our ideas, which are all finite, cannot bear any.

## CHAP. XXX.

## OF REAL AND FANTASTICAL IDEAS.

**I**DEAS, according to the things which they may be supposed to represent, are either Real, or Fantastical: Adequate or Inadequate; True, or False.—

By *real ideas* I mean such as have a foundation in nature,—such as have a conformity with the real being and existence of things, or with their archetypes.—Our simple ideas are all real; not that they are images of things existing, for that has been shewn not to be the case, except in the primary qualities of bodies; but that they are the effects of powers in external things producing in us certain sensations: and our ideas are equally real distinguishing characters, whether they be only constant effects, or exact resemblances; the reality lying in that steady correspondence which they have with the distinct constitutions of real beings: whether they answer to those constitutions, as to causes or patterns, it matters not; it suffices that they are constantly produced by them.—

I call those ideas *fantastical or chimerical*, which have no foundation in nature, nor any conformity with that reality of being, to which they are tacitly referred, as to their archetypes. Our complex ideas

being combinations of simple ideas united under one general name,—I think it is plain that the mind uses some kind of liberty in forming them ; else how happens it that one man's idea of *gold*, or *justice*, is different from another's? the difference must be in some simple idea : but the question is which of those complex ideas is real. Mixed modes and relations having no reality but in the mind, our ideas of them are real when they are so framed that there is a possibility of existing conformable to them, that is when they are made of consistent ideas.—Our complex ideas of substances are real, as far as they comprise all the simple ideas which actually exist in external things. Such ideas of substances as are not conformable to any existing external pattern that we know of, ought to be considered as barely imaginary ; but much more so, these complex ideas which contain any inconsistency or contradiction of parts.

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#### CHAP. XXXI.

##### OF ADEQUATE AND INADEQUATE IDEAS.

I call those ideas *adequate*, which perfectly represent the Archetypes from which the mind supposes them taken : *Inadequate* ideas are but partial or

incomplete representation of the Archetypes to which they are referred.

All our simple ideas are adequate; because being nothing but the effects of certain powers in things so ordained as to produce such sensations in us, they cannot but be correspondent to those powers;—it is true that the things producing simple ideas are too often so denominated, as if those ideas were themselves real beings and not effects only of the things; and therefore when I speak of Secondary Qualities as being, in things, or of their Ideas, I only accommodate myself to vulgar notions, and truly signify nothing but powers in things to excite certain sensations or ideas in us; but the Primary Qualities of bodies we have reason to look on as the real modifications of matter, and the exciting causes of all our various sensations from bodies.

Our *Complex ideas of modes*, being voluntary collections of simple ideas put together by the mind without reference to any archetypes, cannot but be *adequate*; for they are themselves archetypes by which we rank and denominate other things, having all that perfection which the mind intended they should have: thus, having the idea of a figure with three sides and three angles, I cannot suppose any one to have a more perfect idea of the thing signified by the word *Triangle*, supposing it to exist.

In our *ideas of substances*, wishing to represent to

ourselves that constitution on which all their properties depend, we find ourselves unable to attain the perfection we wish : but mixed modes and relations, being archetypes without patterns, and so having nothing to represent but themselves, cannot but be adequate.

He that first put together the ideas of danger, absence of fear, sedate consideration and calm execution of what ought to be done, and united them under the single name of *courage*, could not but form an adequate idea, because he combined in that complex idea all the simple ideas which he intended should compose it :—but another person using the word *courage* with an idea annexed to it different from that of its first author, and yet designing to make his idea an exact pattern of the other's, would so far have an inadequate idea, as the name he used would not be a sign of the Complex idea in the other man's mind.

*Ideas of substances* have in the mind a double reference : Sometimes they are referred to a supposed real essence of each species of things :—sometimes they are only designed to be pictures and representations in the mind of things that exist by ideas of those qualities that are discoverable in them : in both which ways they are inadequate copies of those archetypes.

1st. It is usual for men to make the *names of sub-*

~~stances~~ stand for things as supposed to have certain *real essences*, whereby they are of this or that *species*: and names standing for nothing but the ideas that are in men's minds, they must consequently refer their ideas to such real essences, as to their archetypes: yet if you demand what those essences are, it is plain men are quite ignorant of them: whence the ideas they have in their minds, being referred to real essences as to unknown archetypes, are so far from being adequate that they cannot be supposed to be any representations of them at all. Our *complex ideas of substances* are certain collections of simple ideas constantly observed to exist together; but such a complex idea cannot be the real essence of any substance; for then the properties we discover in the body would depend on that complex idea and be deducible from it, and their necessary connexion with it be known; just as all properties of a triangle depend on, and (as far as they are discoverable) are deducible from the complex idea of three lines including a space:—but in our complex ideas of substances no such ideas are contained, on which all the other qualities found in them depend. The common idea men have of *iron* is a body of a certain colour, weight and hardness; and a property they consider belonging to it is malleableness: but this property has no necessary connexion with that complex idea, or any part of it; and there is no more reason to think that malleable-



ness depends on its colour, weight, and hardness, than that these qualities depend on its malleableness. The farthest I can go then, is only to presume that the real essence of a body, or that internal constitution on which its qualities depend, is nothing but the figure, size, and connexion of its solid parts.

2dly, Those who neglect the useless supposition of *unknown real essences*, and endeavour to copy substances by putting together the simple ideas which make up our complex ideas of them, do not arrive at perfectly adequate ideas of them, because the copies never exactly and fully contain all that is to be found in their archetypes; and, besides, wishing to make their specific names as clear and as little cumbersome as possible, they only combine a few of those simple ideas which they know are to be found in them:—so that as we never can know all the powers that are in any one body, our Idea of a substance can never be adequate, or made up of a collection of all its properties.—Whoever first met with a lump of gold could not rationally suppose that its bulk and figure depend on its essence; these then did not go into his idea of that species of body; its peculiar weight and colour were perhaps the first qualities he put into his idea of the Species: now these are both but powers, the one producing the idea of yellow, and the other of its outweighing a body of equal bulk put into a pair of equal scales:

—another may have added to these the ideas of fusibility and fixedness, two passive powers in relation to the operation of fire upon it;—and another those of ductility and solubility in aqua regia. But no one who has considered the properties of bodies in general, or of this in particular, can doubt that gold has infinite other properties as inseparable from its internal constitution, as its colour and weight.

Our simple ideas then, or ideas of the powers of things are copies, but adequate;—Our complex ideas, or ideas of substances, are also copies, but inadequate;—our ideas of modes and relations are archetypes, and so cannot but be adequate.

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## CHAP. XXXII.

### OF TRUE AND FALSE IDEAS.

**THOUGH** Truth and Falshood belong in propriety of speech only to propositions, yet ideas (with some deviation from the strict signification of the word) are often termed true or false. Ideas being only appearances or perceptions in our minds cannot, any more than the names of things, be properly called true or false: but when the mind has passed some judgment on its ideas, that is, has affirmed or denied something of them, then in popular language we call them true or false.

Ideas may be called true or false according as they

are justly or not referred to things with which we suppose them conformable; as 1st, when the mind supposes any one of its ideas conformable to that in another man's mind, called by the same common name: 2dly, When it supposes any idea conformable to some real existence: 3dly, When it supposes any idea to comprehend the real constitution or essence of any thing.

The mind makes these suppositions chiefly concerning its abstract complex ideas; for its great business being knowledge, in order to make each perception the more comprehensive, the mind binds things up into bundles, and ranks them into sorts; so that whatever knowledge it gets of any one, it may with assurance extend to all of that sort; for this reason we collect things, under comprehensive ideas with names annexed to them, into Genera and Species, i. e. Kinds and Sorts.—

Simple ideas are least of all liable to be false; because a man may easily learn what those simple ideas are which the names in common use stand for, by referring them to external objects. Complex ideas are much more liable to be false; and those of mixed modes more than those of substances; for some few remarkable sensible qualities serve ordinarily to distinguish substances; but it is not so easy to determine of several actions, whether they are to be called Justice or Cruelty, Liberality or Prodigality: and

the reason of this seems to be, that we have no sensible standard any where, but only the definition of the name, so that we can only refer our ideas to the ideas of those who are thought to use those names in the most proper signification.

Our *simple ideas*, being barely such perceptions as the powers of external objects produce in us, cannot be false : nor does it signify whether the mind believes these ideas to be in the things themselves or not ; *blueness* being equally a mark of distinction in a violet, whether we suppose the idea of blue to be in the violet itself or only in our mind.—Even though the same object should produce different ideas in some men's minds, yet to each man his idea would be equally true, provided the same object always produced the same idea ; because he would be able to distinguish things for his own use, and the only falshood would be in the names he might apply to communicate his ideas to others : I am however apt to think that the ideas produced by any object in different men's minds are most commonly very nearly and un-  
discernibly alike.—Neither can our *complex ideas of modes* be false ; for they are purely arbitrary : thus, the idea of a man who will not afford himself such neat, drink, cloathing, and other conveniences of life, as his riches would supply, and his station requires, is not a false one, but represents an action either as I find or imagine it ; though when I give

the name Frugality or Virtue to this conduct, it may be called a false idea, if it be supposed agreeing with that idea to which the name *frugality* properly belongs, or, conformable to that Law which is the standard of virtue and vice. Our *complex ideas of substances*, being all referred to patterns in things themselves, may be false: 1st, when we put together simple ideas, which in the real existence of things have no union; as when to the shape and size of a horse we join the barking of a dog: 2dly, when from any collection of simple ideas which always exist together, we separate any simple idea which is constantly joined with them; as when to extension, solidity, fusibility, the peculiar weight and colour of gold, any one adds the Idea of less fixedness than is in lead or copper: but should any one leave out altogether the idea of fixedness, I think his complex idea ought rather to be called *imperfect* or *inadequate* than *false*; for though it does not contain all the simple ideas united in the nature of gold, yet it puts together none but what really exist.

Though in compliance with the ordinary way of speaking, I have shewn in what sense and upon what ground our Ideas may be sometimes called True or False, yet if we will look a little nearer into the matter in all cases where any idea is called true or false, it is some *judgment* (that the mind makes or is supposed to make) that is true or false: for Truth and

Id being never without some affirmation or negation, express or tacit, it is not to be found *but where joined or separated* according to the agreement or disagreement of the things they stand for.

Thus we chiefly use are either Ideas or Words, and the way we make either mental or verbal propositions and Truth lies in so joining or separating representatives as the things they stand for agree or disagree: Our ideas then, whether conformable or discordant to the existence of things, or to ideas in the minds of others, cannot properly for this alone be called true or false, because they must represent something. But there are three ways in which we may be mistaken, 1st, when we falsely suppose our ideas to agree or disagree with those of other men signified by the same words; 2dly, when we make a complex idea out of many simple ones, and suppose it to agree with the reality of things; 3dly, when we suppose an inadequate or incomplete complex idea to be adequate: 4thly, when we use any complex idea to express the real essences of things.—Upon the whole, I think our ideas, considered with respect to names, or to the reality of things, may more properly be called *right or wrong*, than *true or false*.

## CHAP. XXXIII.

## OF THE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS.

**WE** are apt enough to discover and condemn the extravagancies of other men in their opinions, reasonings, and actions; though we are almost always blind to much greater faults of a similar nature in ourselves. This does not proceed wholly from self-love; for ingenuous men are frequently guilty of it. It is usually attributed to education and prejudice; for the most part truly, though that does not show distinctly whence the disease arises. Education is often rightly assigned the cause; and Prejudice is a good general name for the thing itself; but we must look farther for the original cause of this sort of madness; which though a harsh name, is really the proper one for this Opposition to Reason.

There is scarcely a man so free from it, as that, if he was to argue or act usually as he does occasionally, (even when not under the power of unruly passion) he would not be thought fitter for Bedlam than civil conversation: and indeed enquiring by the bye into the nature of madness, I found it to spring from the very same root as the unreasonableness we are here speaking of. Some of our ideas have a natural connection with one another; and it is the office

and excellence of our reason to keep them united in that correspondence which is founded in their peculiar beings. There is another connexion of ideas wholly owing to chance or custom: ideas in themselves not at all related come to be so united in some men's minds, that one no sooner comes into the understanding than its associate appears with it; and when there are more than two so united, the whole set always shew themselves together. This combination of ideas is either voluntary or casual; and so varies in different men according to their difference of inclination, education, interest, &c.

Custom settles habits of thinking in the Understanding, as well as of determining in the will, and of moving in the body; all which seem to be but trains of motion in the animal spirits, which when once set a going continue in the same track they have been used to, till the motion becomes easy, and as it were natural. As far as we can comprehend Thinking, thus ideas seem to be produced in our minds; or if not, this may serve to explain their following one another in an habitual train, when once put into a certain track, as well as it does to explain such motions of the body. A musician used to any tune will find the ideas of the notes follow one another, and his fingers strike the keys orderly, without any care or attention. To such associations of ideas may be attributed most of the Sympathies and Anti-



pathies observable in men, which work as strongly, and produce as regular effects as if they were natural; and are therefore called so, though at first they had no other original than the accidental connexion of two ideas, which either the strength of the first impression, or future indulgence so united, that they afterwards appear in the mind as one idea. Some of our antipathies indeed are truly natural, depending on our original constitution, and born with us: but many, which we think natural, might be traced to early impressions of which we took no notice. The name of Honey excites immediately ideas of dislike and sickness in the mind of a grown person who has been surfeited with it; but then he knows the origin of this indisposition: had it been given him when a child, the same effects would have followed, but he would have mistaken the cause, and counted the antipathy natural.—I do not mention this for the purpose of distinguishing nicely between natural and acquired antipathies, but to prevent the undue connexion of ideas in the minds of young people, who are most susceptible of lasting impressions; and this connexion of ideas tends more than any thing to give a wrong bias to our natural and moral actions, to our passions, reasonings, and notions.—The idea of Goblins has no more connexion with darkness than light; but if you once raise the two ideas together in the mind of a

child, he may never be able to separate them so long as he lives. A man receives an injury from another, and associates so strongly the ideas of the man and the pain he suffered from him, that he scarcely distinguishes them, but has as much an aversion for the one as the other: thus slight occasions often beget hatreds and continue quarrels.—A man suffers pain in a certain place, and though these ideas have in nature no connexion, yet the idea of the place brings with it that of the pain, and he can as little bear the one as the other.

Reason cannot relieve us from the effects of this combination; and Time cures certain affections which Reason cannot prevail over. When the death of a child has destroyed the comfort of its mother, the consolations of reason are vain, till Time has separated the idea of the enjoyment and its loss from the idea of the child returning to her memory: and therefore some, in whom the union of these ideas is never dissolved, carry an incurable sorrow to their graves.

A Gentleman, who had been cured of madness by a very severe operation, owned the cure to be the greatest obligation he could have received, but could never bear the sight of the operator. Many children so associate the pain of correction with a book at school, that that book ever after is their aversion.

Many other instances of the power of the association of Ideas to render things disagreeable be enumerated.

Intellectual habits thus contracted are frequent and powerful, though less observed than, from the very childhood, have joined and shape to the idea of God, and what will that mind be liable to about the deity! The idea of Infallibility be inseparably joined to the notion of God, and the existence of one body in two places at the same time shall be believed whenever it is suggested. Some such wrong and unnatural combinations of ideas will be found to establish the irreconcilable opposition between different sects of philosophy and religion: for we must allow some of them to pursue truth sincerely: some independent of all alliance to one another must be so joined together by education, custom, and tradition of their party, that they always appear and operate like one idea. This gives scope for sophistry, demonstration to absurdities, and contradiction; and is the foundation of the greatest part of the nonsense; and is the foundation of the greatest part of the errors in the world. It is at least the most dangerous one, since it is not to be removed from seeing and examining.

Having thus given an account of our subject, I intend to shew immediately the use made

Understanding, but I now find that *there*  
*lose a connexion between ideas and words,*  
is impossible to speak clearly of our know-  
(which all consists in propositions) without  
considering the *nature, use, and signification* of  
ge.

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## BOOK III.

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### CHAP. I.

#### OF WORDS, OR LANGUAGE IN GENERAL.

**G**OD designing man for a sociable creature, both by inclination and necessity, gave him language : the great instrument and common tie of society. **M**an therefore had by nature organs fit to frame articulate sounds, or words : but as these are not sufficient for language, he is enabled to use these sounds as signs of internal conceptions ; so that the ideas in men's minds may be mutually communicated. It did not thus render words sufficiently useful : sounds must not only be the signs of ideas, but must comprehend several particular ideas ; for to denote every particular thing by a distinct name would multiply words so as to perplex their use : wherefore general terms were invented to make one word denote a multitude of particular existencies. This advantageous use of signs was obtained only by the diff

ence of the ideas they were made signs of. Some words, instead of denoting any ideas, denote the absence of many or all ideas; as in Latin *nihil*; —in English, *ignorance*, *barrenness*: We cannot properly say that these negative or privative words signify no ideas, for then they would be insignificant sounds; but relating to positive ideas, they denote their absence.—It may lead us a little towards the original of all our knowledge to remark the great dependance of our words on common sensible ideas;—how words derived from obvious sensible ideas are transferred to more abstruse significations, and denote actions and notions quite removed from sense: thus the words, *imagine*, *apprehend*, *comprehend*, *conceive*, *disgust*, *disturbance*, *tranquillity*, are taken from the operations of sensible things, and applied to modes of thinking. The primary signification of *spirit* is *breath*, of *angel* a *messenger*: and doubtless, in all languages, names standing for things that fall not under the notice of our senses originated in sensible ideas.—Hence we may guess what kind of notions they were which filled the minds of the beginners of languages; and how nature, even in the naming of things, suggested to men unawares the originals and principles of all their knowledge.—From sensible objects men borrowed words to express the operations of their minds; and these being the only sources of their ideas, they were furnished with all the materials of

knowledge.—But to understand better the use and force of language as subservient to knowledge, we shall consider; 1st—To what, in the use of language, names are immediately applied: 2dly—Since all, except proper names, are general, we must consider what the sorts and kinds, that is the Species and Genera of things are, wherein they consist, and how they come to be made.—By these means, we shall the better discover the right use of words,—the natural advantages and defects of language,—and the remedies that ought to be used for avoiding the inconveniencies of obscurity or uncertainty in the signification of words; without which it is impossible to discourse with any clearness or order concerning knowledge: for knowledge being conversant about propositions, and those most commonly universal ones, has greater connexion with words than perhaps is suspected.

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## CHAP. II.

### OF THE SIGNIFICATION OF WORDS.

**THE** comfort and advantage of society depending on the communication of thoughts, in order to make them known, some external sensible signs were neces-

sary. To do this fully and quickly nothing was so fit as those articulate sounds which man finds himself able to make with so much ease and variety. Though words are by nature so well adapted to be the signs of ideas, yet the connexion between them is arbitrary, not natural, otherwise there would be but one language amongst men. The use of words being either to record our thoughts for own purposes, or to communicate them to others, they represent in their primary signification, only the ideas of him who uses them, however imperfectly his ideas may have been formed from things themselves. Words that are insignificant are signs of nothing. A child noticing nothing in a substance called *Gold* but the yellow colour, applies the word *Gold* only to his own idea of that colour; and therefore calls the same colour in a peacock's tail *Gold*: another adds great weight to the colour; and another adds fusibility and malleability to these: the word *Gold* equally expresses the idea of each person, but in each case denotes a different idea.—Though words can immediately signify nothing but the ideas in the mind of the speaker, yet men secretly refer them to two other things: 1st, to the ideas in other men's minds; and 2dly, to the reality of things. Men generally use words without examination in the common acceptation, and suppose them associated with ideas precisely the same in the minds of those they address:—and fre-



quently wish to express not merely their own ideas, but the reality of things, and thus introduce obscurity and confusion into the signification of words.—By constant use there is such a connexion between certain sounds, and the ideas they stand for, that the objects themselves could hardly excite their ideas more readily. This is manifest in all qualities and substances that are obvious and familiar to us.—We learn many words, from their constant use, before we know the ideas they stand for; and indeed men, not careful to settle their signification, too, often set their thoughts more on words than things: but words are only of use so far as there is a constant connexion between the sound and the idea.—That words have no natural connexion with ideas, but are quite of arbitrary imposition, is evident from their so often failing to excite in others the ideas we make them the signs of.

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### CHAP. III.

#### OF GENERAL TERMS.

**ALL** things that exist being particulars, it may be thought reasonable that words in their signification should be so too. Yet the greatest part of words

in all languages are general terms; which has not been the effect of neglect or chance; but of reason and necessity. It is impossible and useless to give each thing a distinct name: for in the application of names to things, the mind must have distinct ideas of things, and retain the peculiar appropriation of each name to its idea; but it is out of the power of human capacity to frame and retain distinct ideas of each particular thing. Besides, should any one apply distinct names to his ideas of particular things, he would not be understood, because these names would not excite the same ideas in those who were unacquainted with each distinct object. But, supposing it possible, it would not be of any great use in the advancement of knowledge; which though founded in particulars, enlarges itself by general views, to which things reduced into sorts under general names are properly subservient. Use requires these names, and the mind can contain them: yet where convenience demands it, as in the human species, men having most to do with men, each particular object obtains a distinct denomination. Hence cities, rivers, mountains, and frequently horses, &c. have particular names.—We must next inquire how general terms are made, or where we find those general natures they represent. Words become general, by being made the signs of general ideas: and ideas become general, by separating from them the circumstances

of Time, Place, and any other ideas that may determine them to this or that particular existence. By this way of Abstraction they are made capable of representing more individuals than one; each of which, having in it a conformity to that abstract idea, is (as we say) of that sort. Nothing is more evident than that the ideas of children are all particular:—the Ideas and names of Nurse and Mamma are by them confined to individuals: when afterwards they observe many resemblances between the persons they have been used to and others, they frame an idea comprehending those particulars of agreement, and give it the name of *man*: thus they have a general name and a general idea:—wherein they invent nothing, but only leave out of their complex ideas of Peter and James, Mary and Jane, what is peculiar to each, and retain what is common to all.—In the same way, observing several things to agree with and differ from *man* in certain qualities, they unite their similar qualities into one idea; thus, by leaving out the shape and some other properties signified by the name *man*, and retaining only a body with life, sense, and spontaneous motion, they give to this more general idea the name *animal*. So the mind proceeds to form those universal terms which stand for any of our ideas whatever, as *being*, *thing*: In short, the whole mystery of Genera and Species, so justly disregarded out of the schools, is nothing else but abstract ideas

more or less comprehensive, with names annexed to them; in all which invariably, every more general term stands for such an idea as is but a part of any of those contained under it.—This may shew us the reason why in the defining of words, (which is nothing but declaring their signification) we make use of the *genus*, or next general word that comprehends it: this is not out of necessity, but sometimes to save the labour of enumerating the several simple ideas, and sometimes to conceal our ignorance. Though defining by the *genus* and *differentia* be the shortest way, yet it is not the only, and perhaps not the best way. A definition should enumerate those simple ideas that are combined in the signification of the term defined: and if instead of such enumeration we use the next general term, it is only for the sake of dispatch. I have no doubt but the definition of the term *man*, “*a solid extended substance, having life, sense, spontaneous motion, and the faculty of reason,*” would convey as clear an idea as the definition, “*a rational animal.*” Languages are not always so logically made, as that every complex term can have its signification exactly expressed by others; or else those who made this rule have done ill to give us so few definitions conformable to it.

*Generality* and *universality* belong not to things, but are mere creatures of the Understanding, made for its use, and only concern *signis*, whether words or

ideas. All things are particular in their existence, even those words and ideas which in their signification are general: for the signification they have is nothing but a relation added to them by the mind.—General words only signify sorts of things, being the signs of abstract ideas: and the *essences of the sorts of things* are nothing but these abstract ideas.—Classing the sorts of things then is the workmanship of the understanding, which makes those abstract or general ideas.—I mean not to deny that nature forms several things alike, (for nothing is more obvious, especially in the races of animals) but to class them under general names according to their similitude is the work of the mind. We shall never be able to keep the species of things distinct, if we recur to supposed real essences, instead of determining them by our abstract ideas.—No one will wonder that I consider these *essences* or abstract ideas as artificial, who considers what different collections of simple ideas they denote in the minds of different men, even in the case of substances, where these ideas seem to be taken from the things themselves. But since the essences of things are thought by some, (and not without reason) to be wholly unknown, we will consider the several significations of the word *essence*.—1st, The proper original signification of the word (as is evident from the formation of it) is the being of any thing, whereby it is what it is: thus the internal constitution of

ings, whereon their discoverable qualities depend, may be called their essence. 2dly, the most familiar use of the word essence is its application to the artificial constitution of *genus* and *species*; and then, it denotes that abstract idea with which any class of things agrees.—

These two sorts of Essences may be termed *real* and *nominal*.

The name of any kind or sort of things always expresses the nominal essence.—Concerning the real essence of substances there are two opinions. Some use the word essence for they know not what; and suppose a certain number of essences, according to which all natural things are made, and of which each partakes, so as to be of this or that species. Others, more rationally, suppose all natural things to have a real but unknown constitution of their insensible parts, whence are derived those sensible qualities by which we distinguish them into sorts. The former of these notions has, I think, very much perplexed the knowledge of natural things. The frequent production of monsters in all the species of animals is a difficulty that cannot consist with this hypothesis; since it is as impossible that two things, partaking of the same real essence, should have different properties, as that the properties of two circles should be different. Besides, the supposition of unknown essences is so wholly useless, as to be a sufficient reason

for our rejecting it, and contenting ourselves with such essences as come within the reach of our knowledge; which, when seriously considered, will be found to be nothing else than those abstract complex ideas, to which we have annexed distinct general names. The real and nominal essence is the same in simple ideas and modes, but different in substances: thus, a figure including a space between three lines is the real as well as nominal essence of a triangle; it being not only the abstract idea to which the general name is annexed, but the very being of the thing itself, that foundation from which all its properties flow.—Whereas the two essences of the ring on my finger are apparently different: for the real constitution of its inseparable parts, (on which depend the properties of colour, weight, fusibility, &c.) makes it Gold; which name is therefore its nominal essence.—We are told that essences are all ingenerable and incorruptible: now this cannot be true of the real constitutions of things, which begin and perish with the things themselves: for all things that exist, except their author, are liable to change. What is grass to day, is to-morrow the flesh of a sheep, and soon becomes part of a man, where it is evident that the real essence perishes with each change.

But essences considered as Ideas established in the mind with names annexed, are supposed to remain the same, whatever mutations the particular substances

are liable to.—The ideas of *man* and *horse* remain the same whatever change the species may undergo; so that the essence of a species may remain safe and entire without the existence of one individual of the kind. Were there now no circle actually existing in the world, the idea annexed to the name would not cease to be what it is, and to shew what figure has a right to the name *Circle*. Though there had never been in nature such a beast as an *Unicorn*, yet supposing the name to denote a complex abstract idea that has no inconsistency in itself, the essence of an unicorn is as intelligible, and the idea as permanent as that of a man. Hence it is evident that the doctrine of the immutability of essences proves them to be only abstract ideas; and is founded on the relation established between them and certain sounds as signs of them; which will always be true, as long as the same name can have the same signification.

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#### CHAP. IV.

##### OF THE NAMES OF SIMPLE IDEAS.

**ALL** words signify immediately only the ideas in the mind of the speaker: but the names of simple ideas, mixed modes, (under which I comprise rela-



tions) and natural substances, have each something peculiar.—

1st, The names of simple ideas and of substances intimate some real existence as their pattern; but the names of mixed modes terminate in our ideas. 2dly, The names of simple ideas and of modes always signify the real as well as nominal essence of their Species; but the names of natural substances, rarely if ever, signify more than the nominal essence. 3dly, The names of simple ideas are not capable of any definition; the names of all complex ideas are.—No one, that I know, has yet noticed what words are, and what are not capable of a definition: and the want of this seems to have occasioned great wrangling and obscurity in men's discourses: some requiring definitions of terms that cannot be defined; and others contenting themselves with an explication made by a more general word and its restriction, (or to speak in terms of art, by a genus and difference). I need not trouble myself to prove that, if the terms of one definition were still to be defined by others, the process would be infinite: but I shall shew from the nature of ideas and the signification of words, why some names can and others cannot be defined, and which they are.—I think it is agreed, that a *definition* is the shewing the meaning of one term by others not synonymous. The names then of simple ideas only are incapable of definition; and for this

ion: the several terms of a definition signifying several ideas, they can by no means altogether represent an idea which has no composition at all.—not observing of this difference in our ideas and names has produced that eminent trifling in the schools, which you may observe in their definitions of few simple ideas. What more exquisite jargon in their definition of motion,—“*the act of a being over, as far forth as in power?*” The atomists in their definition “*a passage from one place to another*” translate rather than define; for *passage* and *motion* are synonymous. The Cartesian definition is much better:—“*the successive application of parts of the superficies of one body to those of another.*” No definition of light, however exact, could communicate the Idea of Light to a man born blind: nor would the idea of the cause of light, though never so accurate, give us the idea of light itself, as a perception; any more than the idea of the rest and motion of a sharp piece of steel would give us the idea of that pain which it is able to cause. The cause of any sensation and the sensation itself are all the simple ideas of one sense, are two ideas as different as can be: and therefore the Cartesians distinguish very rightly between Light itself as a cause, and the sensation it produces.—To attempt to produce simple ideas by sounds only is to endeavour to make the ears do the office of all the other senses:

a sort of Philosophy worthy only of Sancho Panca, who had the faculty to see Dulcinea by hearsay. It is quite otherwise in complex ideas; which may be made intelligible by definition to a man who possesses all the simple ideas that compose them. Thus the word Statue may be explained to a blind man by other words, when Picture cannot; because his senses have given him the idea of figure, but not of colours.— Though the names of simple ideas cannot be defined, yet they are the least doubtful; because standing only for a simple perception, men generally agree in their signification. There is neither a multiplicity of simple ideas to be put together, which makes the names of mixed modes doubtful; nor a supposed essence, with an uncertain number of properties depending on it, which makes the difficulty in the names of substances. Simple ideas have but few ascents (*in lineâ predicamentali*, that is,) from the lowest species to the highest genus; for the lowest species being but one simple idea, nothing can be left out of it, so that it shall agree with some other simple idea in a common name. Nothing can be left out of the ideas of *white* and *red* to make them agree in appearance, and so have a common name: but the complex idea of *man*, leaving out his rationality, agrees with *brute* in the more general idea and name of *animal*. When, to avoid enumerations, men would comprehend several simple ideas under one name, they use a word which

denotes the mode of acquiring them : for to comprehend white, red, and yellow under the name *colour*, signifies that such ideas are acquired by the sight. But to comprehend both colours, sounds, and the like simple ideas under a more general term, they use a word which signifies all such as we acquire by only one sense ; and so the general term *quality*, in its ordinary acceptation, comprises colours, sounds, tastes, smells, and tangible qualities, with distinction from extension, number, motion, pleasure and pain, which make impressions on the mind, and introduce their ideas by more senses than one.—The names of mixed modes stand for ideas perfectly arbitrary: those of substances refer to a pattern, but with some latitude: those of simple ideas are exact copies.—The names of simple modes differ little from those of simple ideas.

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## CHAP. V.

### OF THE NAMES OF MIXED MODES AND RELATIONS.

**MIXED** modes differ from simple ideas in this respect, that the abstract ideas (or, if you please, the essences) of the several species of them are

made by the understanding; whereas the mind receives all its simple ideas from external things operating upon it, and cannot make them arbitrarily. The complex ideas of mixed modes too are not, like those of substances, examined by the real existence of things; but are made out of a collection of simple ideas; and that collection, considered as one idea, is the archetype.—The mind then proceeds thus:—it chuses a certain number—gives them connection, and makes them into one idea—and ties them together by a name.—Who can doubt that the ideas of *sacrilege* and *adultery* might be framed in the mind, receive names, and so these species of mixed modes be constituted, before either of them was ever committed; and that we could reason about them as well when they only existed in the understanding, as now when they are become facts? Have not Law-makers often made Laws about species of actions which were only the creatures of their own understandings? I think no one can deny that the *resurrection* was a species of mixed modes in the mind, before it really existed. What greater connexion in nature has the idea of *killing* with that of *father*, than with that of *neighbour*, that it should be the essence of a distinct species called *Parricide*? Though these mixed modes are made by the free choice of the mind, pursuing its own ends, they are not made without reason, and at ran-

but as the great use of language is to signify all conceptions by short sounds, men have only regard to such combinations as were most useful. Moderate skill in different languages will easily convince us of the truth of this ; it being so obvious to see many words in one language which have corresponding to them in another.—This plainly shows that those of one country, by their customs and manner of life, have found occasion to make out complex ideas, which others have never collected into specific ideas.—The ideas a Roman affix to his names of *hour*, *foot*, and *pound*, are different from those of an Englishman : and more so is this the case in more abstract ideas, as generally make up moral discourses.—There is no connexion in nature between the parts of complex ideas, the combination is presented by name : for *essences* and *species* are not real essential things in nature :—but though in the sphere of corporeal substances it be the mind that supplies the nominal essence, yet since the ideas commonly are supposed to have an union in nature, they are considered as distinct species, independent of any operation of the mind. When we speak of *justice* or *modesty*, we frame to ourselves no imagination of any thing existing : and hence, I think, it is, that the *essences* and *species* of mixed modes are called *notions*, as retaining peculiarly to the understanding.—Their

being made by the mind without patterns makes the complex ideas of mixed modes more compounded than those of substances: thus, how many independent ideas of persons, habits, tapers, orders, motions, sounds, does the name *procession* excite? and being arbitrary too, they are always true; because the *real* and *nominal* essence are the same.—For the same reason also, their names are generally learnt before the ideas they stand for are perfectly known; though in the beginning of languages it was necessary to have the idea before one used the name. What one of a thousand ever frames the abstract ideas of *glory* or *ambition* before he has heard the names of them?—What I have said of *mixed modes* is in general so applicable to *relations*, that I shall not enlarge on them.

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## CHAP. VI.

### OF THE NAMES OF SUBSTANCES.

THE common names of substances, as well as other *general terms*, stand for *sorts*; that is, denote a common nature in several substances, capable of being comprehended in one conception. The measure and boundary of each sort or species; by which it is distinguished from others, is what we call its *essence*.

The only essence we know in natural substances is the abstract idea essential to each sort; and we call it the *nominal essence*, to distinguish it from a supposed undiscoverable constitution of the parts of bodies, (called the *real essence*) in which the sensible qualities inhere.

Had we such a knowledge of that constitution of man, from which his faculties of motion, sensation, reasoning, and other powers flow, and on which his so regular shape depends, as 'tis possible angels have, and 'tis certain his maker has, we should have a quite other idea of his essence than what is contained in our definition of his species.

We have no idea of anything essential to individuals. 'Tis necessary for me to be as I am; God and Nature has made me so; but there is nothing I have is essential to me:—an accident or disease may very much alter my colour or shape; a fever or fall may take away my reason or memory, or both; and an apoplexy leave neither sense nor understanding, no, nor life:—other creatures of my shape may be made with more and better, or fewer and worse faculties than I have; and others may have reason and sense in a shape and body very different from mine. None of these are essential to the one or the other, or to any individual whatsoever, till the mind refers it to some sort of things; and then presently, according to the abstract idea of that sort, something is



found essential. Should there be found a parcel of matter having all the qualities of iron, except obedience to the loadstone, would any one question whether it wanted any thing essential.

Without some *abstract idea*, considered as the essence of a sort of things, particular beings regarded merely in themselves will be found to have all their qualities equally essential. Even the *real essence* supposes a species; for being that constitution on which the properties depend, it necessarily implies a sort of things; properties belonging only to sorts, and not to individuals. Indeed, as to real essences of substances, we only suppose their being, without precisely knowing what they are. The *nominal essence* determines the species: for that is all that the names of things can denote: since we find many of the individuals that are ranked into one sort, called by one common name, and so considered as one species, possessing qualities as far different from one another, as from others which are accounted specifically different.—This is obvious to all who have much experience in natural bodies. There is not so contemptible a plant or animal that does not confound the most enlarged understanding: the familiar use of things about us cures our wonder, but not our ignorance: the internal constitution, on which their properties depend, being unknown to us. Nor does the supposition of *internal substantial*

*forms* render our ideas of the essences of things at all more intelligible than that of an imagined *real essence*.

This is farther evident from our ideas of *spirits* and of *God*. We have no other notion of spirits than that of a sort of beings having all the faculties of our minds, without any thing material. Though we are told that there are different species of Angels, we can frame no distinct ideas of them: but only attribute the powers of our own minds to some in a higher, to others in a lower degree. Our notion of God consists of the same ideas without limitation. It is not impossible to conceive, nor repugnant to reason, that there may be many species of spirits as distinguished by their properties as the sensible things with which we are acquainted. That there should be more species of intelligent creatures above us than there are of sensible and material below us, seems probable to me, from this; that in all the visible corporeal world we see no chasms or gaps: the descent from us is by easy steps, and a continued series of things, that in each remove differ very little one from the other. There are fishes that have wings, and are not strangers to the airy region: some birds inhabit the water, whose blood is as cold as that of fishes, and their flesh so like in taste, that the scrupulous are allowed them on fish-days. Amphibious animals link the terrestrial and aquatic together: seals live at

land and sea ; and porpoises have the warm blood and entrails of a hog. Some brutes seem to have as much reason as some men : and the animal and vegetable kingdoms are so nearly joined, that if you take the lowest of the one, and the highest of the other, there will be very little perceivable difference between them. If we consider the power and wisdom of the maker, we have reason to think it suitable to the magnificent harmony of the universe, that the species of creatures should ascend from us towards his infinite perfection, as we see them descend by gentle degrees from us :—but we are much more remote from the perfection of God than from the lowest state of being.

If I were to ask, whether *ice* and *water* were two distinct species, I doubt not that I should be answered in the affirmative ; and rightly : but if a West-Indian, who had never heard of ice, coming into England in winter, should find that the water in his bason at night was frozen in the morning, and should call it *hardened water*, would this be to him a new species distinct from water ? I think it would be answered no : no more than congealed jelly is a distinct species from fluid jelly. — If this be so, 'tis plain that our distinct species are only different complex ideas with distinct names.

In order to be able to distinguish beings into species according to precise *essences*, we should know

whether nature always designs that things should of certain essences, and 2dly, whether she attains the essence she designs: of both these the monstrous births of some animals give us no doubt: 3dly, whether what we call monstrously a distinct species; and 4thly, we ought to be clear of these essences.

The *essence* of any thing in respect of us is *the complex idea marked by the name*: when this and the real essence are convertible terms, the one is put for the other without absurdity: some then confound the essence of body, and *rationality* of man; yet we cannot say that *one excludes another* by impulse, or that *rationality* is capable of *conversation*: here then the terms *body* and *rationality* cannot be put for *body* and

as if there were discoverable real essences in all the names of things must always have been related by obvious appearances; for Languages and countries have been established long before us. Monsieur Menage gives us an example, and shows how little we are able to determine the nature of an animal, either from the faculties of the mind or the shape of the body:—The abbot of St. Denis was born with so little of the figure of a man, that for some time doubted whether he should be baptized or not: however, he was baptized, and

declared a man provisionally, till time should shew what he would prove. He was called all his life the Abbot Malotrû.

The nominal essences of substances are not made so arbitrarily as those of mixed modes: the ideas of which they consist must have such an union as to make but one idea however compounded; and the ideas so united must be always the same. Though these ideas are really copied from nature, yet the number of ideas combined in them depends upon the care or fancy of him that makes them. In vegetables and animals the species is generally determined by the shape; in other things by the colour. Names thus formed serve well enough for common intercourse, but by no means comprehend in a settled signification a precise number of simple ideas.

The more general our ideas are, the more incomplete and partial they must be; because many distinguishing particulars are omitted, and such qualities only are combined as are common to several sorts: but in these cases brevity is more required than precision. The *Genus* then, or more comprehensive kind, is but a partial conception of what is contained in the species; and the *Species*, or more limited kind, is but an incomplete idea of what is to be found in the individual. Nature makes the similitude between things, and from that similitude man makes the species. A *silent* and a *striking watch* are but

species to those who have but one name for but whoever has the name *watch* for one, and for the other, and distinct complex ideas which those names belong, to him they are different species. Hence we may see why the species of artificial things are in general more clearly distinguished than of natural things; for being the products of men, and their essence consisting for the part in nothing but the determinate figure and measured motion of sensible parts, we are able to form more certain ideas of them, and settle their names with greater precision.

Instances alone of all our sorts of ideas have equal or proper names: for in *simple ideas, and relations*, it seldom happens that men have occasion to mention this or that particular, when they mention it: besides the greatest part of *mixed modes*, and actions which perish in their birth, are not of a lasting duration, as Substances are, and are the agents.

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## CHAP. VII.

### OF PARTICLES.

IN *IDEAS* the names of ideas, there are many which signify the connexion the mind gives to

**Ideas, or Propositions.** The mind not only wants signs of ideas, but signs of its own actions, relating to those ideas: these words by which it signifies the connexion it gives to several affirmations and negations united in one continued reasoning or narration, are generally called particles; and in the right use of these more particularly consists the clearness and beauty of a good style.

To think well, it is not enough to have clear ideas, nor to observe their agreement or disagreement; but we must think with method, and observe the dependence of our thoughts and reasonings upon one another. To express such thoughts well, we must have words to shew the connexion, restriction, distinction, opposition, emphasis, &c. of each part of our discourse. Hence the necessity of those words which are not truly the names of ideas.

Of the parts of grammar this perhaps has been as much too neglected, as others have been too laboured. They have with great shew of exactness, been ranked into their several orders: but he who would shew their proper significancy and force must take a little more pains, enter into his own thoughts, and observe nicely the several postures of his mind in discoursing: for they are all *marks* of some *action* or intimation of the mind. The number of particles in any language is scarcely sufficient to express all the views of the mind; and therefore most of them have divers,

and sometimes almost opposite significations. There is a particle of a single letter in the Hebrew tongue, of which there are reckoned, as I remember, seventy, I am sure above fifty significations.

*But* is one of the most familiar particles in our language: and he that calls it a *discretive conjunction* answering *sed* in Latin, or *mais* in French, thinks he has sufficiently explained it: but it seems to me to intimate several relations of propositions, or of parts of them.—1st. *But to say no more*: here it intimates a stop of the mind in the course it was going, before it came to the end.—2dly, *I saw but two plants*: here it shews that the mind limits the sense to what is expressed, with a negation of all other.—3dly, *You pray: but it is not that God would bring you to the true religion, but that he would confirm you in your own*: the first intimates a supposition in the mind of something otherwise than it should be; the latter shews that the mind makes a direct opposition between that and what goes before it.—5thly. *All animals have sense; but a dog is an animal*: here it signifies little more, than that the latter proposition is joined to the former, as the Minor of a Syllogism. Many other significations of this particle might be added, in all of which I doubt if it would deserve the title of *discretive*: but I intend not here a full explication of this sort of signs; some of which have the sense of a whole sentence contained in them,



## CHAP. VIII.

## OF ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE TERMS.

IF we had considered words with attention, they would have given us an insight into the nature of our ideas. We have shewn that the mind has a power to abstract its ideas, so as to make them general essences, to distinguish the sorts of things.

Abstract ideas are all distinct; so that not any two abstract words can be affirmed one of another: though *man* is a *rational animal*; we cannot say that *humanity* is *animality*, or *rationality*. We may observe that all our *simple ideas* have *abstract* as well as *concrete* names; whereof one is a substantive, the other an adjective; as, *whiteness*, *white*; *sweetness*, *sweet*; and the same is the case with our ideas of *modes and relations*; as *justice*, *just*; *equality*, *equal*. But as to our ideas of *substances*, we have few or none *abstract names* of them at all. The schools coined a few, which could never gain admittance into common use; as *animalitas*, *corporietas*, *humanitas*: and this seems to me to intimate the confession of all mankind, that they have no ideas of the real essences of substances, since they have not names for them. *Humanitas* indeed was a word familiar among the Romans, not for the abstract es-

sence of any substance, but for the name of a mode ; and its concrete was *humanus* not *homo*.

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## CHAP. IX.

### OF THE IMPERFECTION OF WORDS.

**F**ROM what has been said we may easily perceive the imperfection of language ; and that from their very nature many words must be doubtful and uncertain in their signification : but to determine how far they are perfect, we must consider their use and end. We have already mentioned a double use of words, one to record our thoughts, and the other to communicate them. Any words will serve a man to record his own thoughts by, as long as he constantly uses the same sign for the same idea.

Words for communication of thoughts have a double use ; a *civil* and a *philosophical*. By their civil use, I mean such a communication of ideas by words as will serve for the ordinary commerce of life : by their philosophical use, I mean such as may serve to convey precise notions of things, and to express in general propositions certain undoubted truths which the mind may rest upon in its search after knowledge. Much greater exactness is required in this use of them than in the former.

Sounds having no natural connexion with our ideas,

the uncertainty of their signification has its cause in the ideas they stand for. The idea which each represents should be learnt and retained by those who would discourse intelligibly: but this is hardest to be done, —1st, where the ideas they denote are very complex: —2dly, where the ideas having no connexion in nature, can be adjusted by no fixt standard:—3dly, where the signification of the word is referred to a standard not easily known:—and 4thly, where the signification of the word and the real essence of the thing are not exactly the same.

The names of mixed modes are most liable to imperfection for the two first of these ~~Reasons~~, and the names of substances chiefly for the two last. The names of mixed modes are doubtful, 1st, *because the ideas they denote are very complex*: thus moral terms have seldom the same precise signification in two different men, since one man's complex idea seldom agrees with another's, and often differs from his own:—2dly, and *because they for the most part want standards in nature*: the signification of the words *murder* and *sacrilege* cannot be known from things themselves: many of the parts of those complex ideas are not visible in the actions themselves: the intention of the mind, or the relation of holy things has no necessary connexion with the outward action of him who commits either. Common use, that is, the Rule of Propriety, regulates the meaning of words

tolerably well for common conversation; but in philosophical discourses a precise signification is required for them. Common use allows such a latitude to all names of complex ideas in particular, that the measure of propriety frequently becomes a matter of dispute. What different ideas do the terms *Glory* and *Gratitude* excite in different men. The way of learning the names of mixed modes contributes to the doubtfulness of their signification: for children learn the names of simple ideas and substances, by being immediately told the name that expresses such a sensation or perception; but in mixed modes, (and especially moral terms which are most material,) the sound is usually learnt first, and the explication of it left to their own observation, or that of others: and so little regard is generally had to the precise meaning of terms, that most men have but a very confused and vague sense of the signification of moral words. In the controversial debates, or familiar discourse, even of intelligent and studious men, what different notions do we observe them to entertain of the terms, *Honour, Faith, Grace, Religion, Church*. Hence in the interpretation of Laws, divine or human, comments beget comments, and explications make new matter for explications without end.

I need not notice (for the numerous volumes of learned men sufficiently prove) the obscurity that must from this cause hang over the writings of the

antients. However as no writings greatly concern us, but those which contain either Truths to be believed or Laws to be obeyed, from the mistake or transgression of which we may suffer inconvenience, we need not be very anxious about the sense of other works : when authors therefore, who give us only their own opinions (which we are under no greater necessity to know, than they to know our's) deliver them obscurely, we may without injustice resolve thus, “ Si non vis intelligi, debes negligi.”

The names of substances are doubtful for a contrary reason ;—*that they are referred to standards in nature*, and are only of use as far as they are conformable to the reality of things : and their uncertainty arises from the various and imperfect notions which men have of these external patterns. When they are supposed to denote the essence, or real constitution of things, they are referred to standards that cannot be known. The proper standard for adjusting the name of any substance is the number of simple ideas co-existing in it : and these are all that the name can immediately signify. The simple qualities which make up these complex ideas, being mostly powers, in relation to changes made on or received from other bodies, are almost infinite : and different men, according to the tests they apply, and their skill in analysing bodies, must have very different notions of them. Almost every particular thing, in

some of its simple ideas communicates with a greater, and in others with a less number of individual beings; in which case, who is to determine the collection of simple ideas to be signified by the name? Some obvious qualities, such as the shape, colour, &c. are sufficient to determine the ordinary signification of these names: but in philosophical inquiries, where general truths are to be established, and consequences drawn from positions laid down, the precise signification of these names will be found, not only not well established but very hard to be so.

Knowing what obscurity the doubtful signification of words must cause in strict inquiries, I was always apt to suspect that the greatest part of disputes were more about the meaning of words than a real difference in the conception of things.

“The great disorder that happens in our Names of Substances, proceeding for the most part from our want of knowledge, and inability to penetrate into their real constitutions, it may probably be wondered *Why I charge this as an imperfection rather upon our Words than Understandings.* This exception has so much appearance of justice, that I think myself obliged to give a reason why I have followed this method.

I must confess then, that when I first began this discourse of the Understanding, and a good while after, I had not the least thought that any considera-

tion of Words was at all necessary to it. But when having passed over the original and composition of our *Ideas*, I began to examine the extent and certainty of our knowledge, I found it had so near a connexion with words, that unless their *force and manner of Signification* were first well observed, there could be very little said clearly and pertinently concerning knowledge: which being conversant about Truth, had constantly to do with Propositions. And though it terminated in Things, yet it was for the most part so much by the intervention of Words, that they seemed scarce separable from our general Knowledge. At least they interposed themselves so much between our Understanding, and the Truth which it would contemplate and apprehend, that like the *medium* through which visible objects pass, their obscurity and disorder does not seldom cast a mist before our Eyes, and impose upon our Understandings.

If we consider, in the fallacies men put upon themselves as well as others, and the mistakes in men's disputes and notions, how great a part is owing to Words, and their uncertain or mistaken significations, we shall have reason to think this no small obstacle in the way of Knowledge; which, I conclude, we are the more carefully to be warned of, because it has been so far from being taken notice of as an inconvenience, that the arts of improving it have been made the business of men's study, and obtained

the reputation of Learning and Subtlety, as we shall see in the following chapter.

But I am apt to imagine, that were the Imperfections of Language, *as the instrument of knowledge*, more thoroughly weighed, a great many of the controversies that make such a noise in the world, would of themselves cease; and the way to Knowledge, and perhaps Peace too, lie a great deal opener than it does.

Sure I am that the Signification of Words in all languages, depending very much on the Thoughts, notions, and ideas of him that uses them, must unavoidably be of great uncertainty to men of the same language and country. This is so evident in the Greek authors, that he that shall peruse their writings will find in almost every one of them a distinct language, though the same words. But when to this natural difficulty in every country there shall be added different countries, and remote ages, wherein the speakers and writers had very different notions, tempers, customs, ornaments, and figures of speech, &c. every one of which influenced the signification of their words then, though to us now they are lost and unknown, *it would become us to be charitable one to another in our interpretations or misunderstanding of those antient Writings*, which, though of great concernment to be understood, are liable to the unavoidable difficulties of speech, which (if we



except the names of simple ideas, and some very obvious things) is not capable without a constant defining the terms, of conveying the sense and intention of the speaker, without any manner of doubt and uncertainty to the hearer. And in discourses of Religion, Law, and Morality, as they are matters of the highest concernment, so there will be the greatest difficulty.

The volumes of interpreters and commentators on the Old and New Testament are but too manifest proofs of this. Though every thing said in the Text be infallibly true, yet the reader may be, nay, cannot chuse but be very fallible in the understanding of it. Nor is it to be wondered that the Will of GOD, when clothed in Words, should be liable to that doubt and uncertainty which unavoidably attends that sort of conveyance ; when even his Son, whilst clothed in flesh, was subject to all the frailties and inconveniencies of human nature, sin excepted. And we ought to magnify his goodness, that he hath spread before all the world such legible characters of his works and providence, and given all mankind so sufficient a light of reason, that they, to whom his written Word never came, could not (whenever they set themselves to search) either doubt of the being of a GOD, or of the obedience due to him. Since then the precepts of natural religion are plain, and very intelligible to all mankind, and seldom come to be contro-

verted; and other revealed truths, which are conveyed to us by books and languages, are liable to the common and natural obscurities and difficulties incident to words; methinks it would become us to be more careful and diligent in observing the former, and less magisterial, positive, and imperious, in imposing our own sense and interpretations of the latter."

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## CHAP. X.

### OF THE ABUSE OF WORDS.

**MEN** are guilty of many wilful neglects in discourse, which render the signification of signs more uncertain than it need be; by *using words without clear and distinct ideas*, or without any ideas at all. The authors of the several sects of Philosophy and Religion have introduced many of these; either affecting something singular, or wishing to support some strange opinion, or cover some weak hypothesis: and when once they become the distinguishing characters of a church or school, few care to examine ~~their~~ precise signification. I shall not heap up instances, but refer an inquirer to the great mint-masters of these terms—the school-men, and metaphy-

icians, with whom I class the disputing natural and moral philosophers of these latter ages.

Men being accustomed from their cradles to learn names, without understanding the complex ideas they represent, and finding that they will serve them in the ordinary occurrences of life, seldom take the pains to learn their determinate meaning : their reasonings therefore concerning their tenets or interest, but especially in moral matters, are mostly an empty jargon. They have indeed one advantage—as they seldom are in the right, so they are seldom to be convinced that they are in the wrong :—it being all one to go about to draw these men out of their mistakes as to dispossess a vagrant of his habitation.

Another great abuse of words is *Inconstancy in the use of them*. This abuse is common in subjects of controversy : and it denotes either great folly or great dishonesty. A man in his accompts might as well use characters that stand sometimes for one collection of units and sometimes for another : but the former cheat is the greater, in proportion as Truth is of more concern and value than Money.

A third abuse is *an affected obscurity* ; when without defining them, we use old words in new and unusual senses, or introduce new and ambiguous terms. The Peripatetick philosophy has been most eminent in this

It is plain to any one on a little reflection, that Body and Extension in common use denote distinct

ideas: otherwise we might as well say the *Body of an Extension*, as the *Extension of a Body*; and yet some find it necessary to confound their signification.

Logick and the liberal Sciences, as handled in the schools, have given reputation to this abuse: and the admired art of disputing has much encreased the natural imperfection of Language; being used more to perplex words, than to discover things. If reputation and rewards are to attend skill in disputing, (where the victory is adjudged not to him who asserts the Truth, but to him who talks the longest) no wonder that the wit of man should perplex the signification of sounds. This useless skill, quite opposite to the ways of knowledge, has been admired as subtlety, and acuteness. It was found a good expedient to cover ignorance and procure admiration: Terms that are unintelligible being from that very cause apter to produce wonder: and it appears from history that these profound doctors were not wiser or more useful than their neighbours.—“For notwithstanding these learned disputants, these all-knowing doctors, it was to the unscholastick statesman, that the governments of the world owed their peace, defence, and liberties; and from the illiterate and contemned mechanick, (a name of disgrace) that they received the improvements of useful Arts. Nevertheless this artificial ignorance and *learned Gibberish* prevailed mightily in these last ages, by the interest and artifice of

those, who found no easier way to that pitch of authority and dominion they have attained, than by amusing the men of business, and ignorant, with hard words, employing the ingenious and idle in intricate disputes about unintelligible terms, and holding them perpetually entangled in that endless labyrinth. Besides, there is no such way to gain admittance, or give defence to strange and absurd doctrines, as to guard them round about with legions of obscure, doubtful and undefined words; which yet make these retreats more like the dens of robbers, or holes of foxes, than the fortresses of fair warriors; which if it be hard to get them out of, it is not for the strength that is in them, but the briars and thorns, and the obscurity of the thickets they are beset with. For Untruth being unacceptable to the mind of man, there is no other defence left for absurdity but Obscurity.

“ Thus learned ignorance, and this art of keeping even inquisitive men from true knowledge, hath been propagated in the world, and hath much perplexed, whilst it pretended to inform the Understanding. For we see that other well-meaning and wise men, whose education and parts had not acquired that acuteness, could intelligibly express themselves to one another; and in its plain use, make a benefit of language. But though unlearned men well enough understood the words *white* and *black*, &c. and had constant notions of the ideas signified by those words; yet there

were Philosophers found, who had learning and subtlety enough to prove, that *Snow was black*, i. e. to prove, that *white* was *black*; whereby they had the advantage to destroy the instruments and means of discourse, conversation, instruction, and society; whilst with great art and subtlety they did no more but perplex and confound the signification of words, and thereby render language less useful than the real defects of it had made it; a gift which the illiterate had not attained to.

“ These learned men did equally instruct men’s understandings, and profit their lives, as he who should alter the signification of known characters, and, by a subtle device of learning, far surpassing the capacity of the illiterate, dull, and vulgar, should in his writing shew that he could put *A* for *B*, and *D* for *E*, &c. to the no small admiration and benefit of his reader, it being as senseless to put *black*, which is a word agreed on to stand for one sensible idea, to put it, I say, for another, or the contrary idea, i. e. to call *Snow black*, as to put this mark *A*, (which is a character agreed on to stand for one modification of sound, made by a certain motion of the organs of speech,) for *B*, which is agreed on to stand for another modification of sound by another certain motion of the organs of speech.

“ Nor hath this mischief stopped in logical niceties, or curious empty speculations; it hath invaded

the great concernments of human life and society; obscured and perplexed the material truths of law and divinity; brought confusion, disorder, and uncertainty into the affairs of mankind; and if not destroyed, yet in great measure rendered useless, those two great rules, Religion and Justice. What have the greatest part of the comments and disputes upon the laws of God and man served for, but to make the meaning more doubtful, and perplex the sense? What has been the effect of those multiplied curious distinctions, and acute niceties, but obscurity and uncertainty, leaving the words more unintelligible, and the reader more at a loss? How else comes it to pass, that princes, speaking or writing to their servants, in their ordinary commands, are easily understood; speaking to their people, in their laws, are not so? And as I remarked before, doth it not often happen that a man of an ordinary capacity very well understands a text, or a law that he reads, till he consults an expositor, or goes to counsel; who by that time he hath done explaining them, makes the words signify either nothing at all, or what he pleases.

“Whether any by-interests of these professions have occasioned this, I will not here examine; but I leave it to be considered, whether it would not be well for mankind, whose concernment it is to know things as they are, and to do what they ought, and not to spend their lives in talking about them, or

tossing words to and fro ; whether it would not be well, I say, that the use of words were made plain and direct ; and that language, which was given us for the improvement of knowledge, and bond of society, should not be employed to darken truth, and unsettle people's rights ; to raise mists, and render unintelligible both morality and religion ? or that at least, if this will happen, it should not be thought Learning or Knowledge to do so ?”

A fourth abuse of words is *the taking them for things* : which those are most subject to who confine their thoughts to any one system, and firmly adopt any received hypothesis. Those bred in the Peripatetick school fancy the ten names, under which the ten predicaments are ranked, to be exactly conformable to the nature of things. The Platonists have their *soul of the world*, and the Epicureans their *endeavour towards motion* in their atoms when at rest. Every sect almost has a distinct set of terms unintelligible to others : and yet this gibberish, which in the weakness of the human understanding serves so well to palliate men's ignorance, and cover their errors, is considered in each sect as the most important and significant part of language.

How many intricate disputes have there been about *Matter*, as if there were some such thing really in nature, distinct from *body* ; as it is evident the word matter stands for an idea distinct from the



idea of body.—If these terms denoted the same ideas, they might be used indifferently : but though we say there is *one matter of all bodies*, we cannot say there is *one body of all matters* ; for this reason—though *matter* and *body* be not really distinct, they denote different conceptions, whereof the one is but a part of the other. *Body* stands for a solid extended figured substance whereof *matter* is but a partial and more confused conception ; and seems to be used for the substance and solidity of body, without taking in its extension and figure :—for we no more conceive of different *matters* than of different *solidities* ; though we speak of different *bodies* ; because extension and figure are capable of variation.

We should have many fewer disputes in the world, if words were taken for what they are, *the signs of our ideas only*, and not for things themselves. It would be a hard matter to persuade any one that the words, which his father, or school-master, the parson of the parish, or such a reverend doctor used, signified nothing that really existed in nature.

Another abuse of words is *when we endeavour to make them express the real essence of substances* : thus when we define *man*, a *rational animal*, rather than a *two legged animal, without feathers, and with broad nails*, it is plain we suppose the real essence best described in the first definition. We are apt to run into this abuse from the supposition that

he same precise internal constitution goes always with the same specifick name; whereas many individuals ranked under the same name are as different in their constitution as those of different species.

A sixth abuse, is our taking words to be the constant marks of agreed notions, which in truth are no more than voluntary and unsteady signs of our own ideas. No term is more familiar than *Life*: yet it may come in question whether a plant that lies ready formed in the seed has life; whether an embrio in the egg before incubation, or a man in a swoond, without sense or motion, have life: for knowledge and reasoning require precise determinate ideas. The multiplication and obstinacy of disputes, which has so laid waste the intellectual world, is owing to nothing more than to this ill use of words.

“ Since Wit and Fancy finds easier entertainment in the world, than dry Truth and real Knowledge, *figurative speeches*, and allusion in Language, will hardly be admitted as an imperfection or abuse of it. I confess, in discourses, where we seek rather pleasure and delight than information and improvement, such ornaments as are borrowed from them, can scarce pass for faults. But yet, if we would speak of things as they are, we must allow that all the art of of Rhetorick, besides Order and Clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of words Eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate

wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment, and so indeed are perfect cheats : and therefore however laudable or allowable oratory may render them in harangues and popular addresses, they are certainly, in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided ; and where Truth and Knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the Language or Person that makes use of them. What and how various they are, will be superfluous here to take notice ; the books of rhetorick which abound in the world will instruct those who want to be informed. Only I cannot but observe, how little the preservation and improvement of Truth and Knowledge is the care and concern of mankind ; since the arts of Fallacy are endowed and preferred. It is evident how much men love to deceive and be deceived, since Rhetorick, that powerful instrument of error and deceit, has its established professors, is publickly taught, and has always been had in great reputation : and I doubt not, but it will be thought great boldness, if not brutality, in me to have said thus much against it. *Eloquence*, like the fair sex, has too prevailing beauties in it, to suffer itself ever to be spoken against. And it is in vain to find fault with those arts of deceiving, wherein men find pleasure to be deceived."

## CHAP. XI.

## OF THE REMEDIES OF THE FOREGOING IMPERFECTIONS AND ABUSES.

**WHOEVER** should attempt to reform the languages of the world, or even that of his own country, would render himself ridiculous; because men will not use their words constantly in the same sense, nor talk of those things only about which they have clear and distinct ideas:—whoever would do this, must prevail on them to be very knowing or very silent.

But though the Market and Exchange must be left to their own way of talking, those who pretend to search for and maintain the Truth should think themselves bound to study perspicuity and strictness in their language. Language being the great conduit whereby men convey their discoveries and reasonings to one another, whoever makes an ill use of it (though he does not corrupt the Fountains of Knowledge, which are in things themselves) does as much as in him lies to break or stop the pipes whereby it is distributed to the publick use and advantage of mankind.

That subtlety, which has been so much admired, consisting mostly in the illusory use of obscure terms, is only fit to make men more conceited in their igno-

rance, and more obstinate in their errors. The learning of disputation consists in the vain ostentation of sounds. When I see a controversialist strip all his terms of ambiguity and obscurity, I shall think him a champion for knowledge, truth, and peace, and not the slave of vain-glory, ambition, or a party.

To remedy the defects of speech, the first rule I would give is, To use no word without a signification, no name without an idea for which we make it stand. 2dly, To be careful that our ideas be clear, distinct, and determinate, that is, comprising a precise collection of simple ideas: In the names of substances, something more is required than barely determinate ideas;—they must be conformable to things as they exist. 3dly, we must attend to propriety; that is, we must apply our words, as nearly as possible, to those ideas which common use has annexed them to. 4thly, when the signification of words is vague, or the advancement of knowledge requires signs for new ideas, we ought to declare the meaning we affix to them.

The meaning of words may be made known in three ways:—1st, as the name of a simple idea cannot be explained by definition, we must find a synonymous term, or name the subject wherein it is to be found, or present the archetype to the senses. —2dly, Mixed modes, being mostly arbitrary combinations of ideas, without reference to any arche-

types, and the ideas that compose them being exactly known, may be perfectly defined.—Upon this ground, I think that morality is capable of demonstration, as well as mathematicks.—3dly, the signification of the names of substances is in many cases best explained both by shewing the archetype and by giving a definition. The characteristic marks, or principal sensible qualities of things, are the chief ingredients of our specific ideas, and therefore form the most observable unvarying part in our definitions of their names: now these leading qualities can hardly be made known but by shewing their archetypes: but because many of the simple ideas that compose our specific ideas of substances are powers not obvious to the senses in the ordinary appearance of bodies, an enumeration of them will better explain the meaning of the name than the actual presence of the archetype: for he, that to the yellow colour of gold shall add the ideas of ductility, fusibility, &c. from my enumeration of them, will have a perfecter idea of it than he could derive from it's obvious qualities only.

The whole extent of our knowledge or imagination reaches not beyond our own ideas, limited to our ways of perception. Spirits, separate from bodies, have no doubt a knowledge much more perfect than ours; though the manner of acquiring it exceeds our conceptions. *Definitions* serve well enough to

explain the names of substances, as standing for our ideas, but not as standing for the things themselves: for to define the names of things rightly, natural history must be enquired into, that their properties may be carefully examined. A *vocabulary*, where these words were explained by little draughts and prints, would teach the signification of many terms much better than all the large and laborious comments of learned critics. *Toga, Tunica, Pallium*, are easily translated *gown, coat, and cloak*; but we have thereby no more true ideas of the fashion of those habits among the Romans than we have of the faces of the tailors who made them.

The fifth Rule to be observed, is to use words constantly in the same sense. Were this to be done, many great volumes, swollen with ambiguous words, would shrink into a very narrow compass; and many works of the Philosophers as well as Poets might be contained in a nutshell. But after all, the provision of words is so scanty, compared with the variety of our ideas, that words must sometimes be varied a little in their sense: and it will be sufficient, in cases where the import of the discourse does not lead candid and intelligent readers into the true meaning, that the writer explain his own meaning.

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## BOOK IV.

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### CHAP. I.

#### OF KNOWLEDGE IN GENERAL.

SINCE the mind can contemplate no other immediate objects than its own ideas, it is evident that our knowledge is only convergent about them. Knowledge then seems to be nothing but the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas. To know that *white is not black*, is but to perceive that these two ideas do not agree:—to be assured that *the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones*, is only to perceive the inseparable agreement between the three angles of a triangle and two right ones.

This agreement is of four kinds:—1. Identity or Diversity. 2. Relation. 3. Co-existence, or necessary connexion. 4. Real Existence.

The first act of the mind is so to perceive its ideas as to observe their difference, and know that one is



not another : without which there could be no knowledge. This is done without labour or deduction, by the natural power of perception and distinction. The first exercise of this faculty is about particular ideas; and no rule can make us more certain that the ideas we call by one name are not those called by another. Whenever any doubts happen, they will be found to be about the identity of the names, and not of the ideas.

The next sort of agreement may be called Relative: and is the perception of the relation between any two ideas, when they are compared for the sake of finding out whether they agree or not.

The third sort of agreement or disagreement concerns the Co-existence of qualities in the same subjects; and this belongs particularly to substances. Thus when we pronounce *gold* to be *fixed*; we only know that *fixedness*, or a power to remain in the fire unconsumed, is an idea always accompanying a particular set of properties which constitute our idea of *gold*.

The last kind is that of Real Existence agreeing with any idea; or its having a being out of the mind.

All then that we can know of any idea is—whether it is distinct;—whether it always coexists with some other idea in the same subject; whether it has this or that relation to some other idea;—and whether it has a real existence without the mind.

Thus; *blue is not yellow*, is of identity; *two triangles upon equal bases between two parallels are equal*, is of relation; *iron is susceptible of magnetical impressins*, is of coexistence; *God is*, is of real existence.

Though *identity* and *coexistence* are truly nothing but relations, yet they are so peculiar as to deserve distinct consideration.

There are two kinds of knowledge, *actual* and *habitual*.

The first is the present view the mind has of the agreement or disagreement of its ideas, or of their relation to one another.

The last is the certainty of the truth of a proposition, from a recollection of the perception we formerly had of the agreement or disagreement of the ideas it consists of.

There are two degrees of habitual knowledge: the one is of those truths where we have an intuitive knowledge of the relation between the ideas; the other of those, where we recollect our conviction, without remembering the proofs. In this case a man may seem rather to *believe his memory*, than to *know*; and it once seemed to me a sort of assurance between opinion and knowledge; but I find it comes not short of perfect certainty. The agreement or disagreement of two ideas in a proposition is in this case perceived by the intervention of other

ideas than those which first produced our perception of the truth or falsehood of the proposition: for instance, a person remembers, that is, he knows (for remembrance is but the reviving of some past knowledge) that he was once certain of the truth of the proposition: "that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones;" and the intervening idea, by which he now knows this, is the immutability of the same relations between the same immutable things: hence what he once knew to be true, he will always know to be so, as long as he can remember that he once knew it. It is upon this ground, viz. our perception that the same ideas will eternally have the same habitudes and relations, that particular demonstrations in mathematics afford us general knowledge. As the memory however is not always so clear as actual perception, and decays more or less in all men through length of time, this, among other differences, shews us that *demonstrative* knowledge is much less perfect than *intuitive*.

## CHAP. II.

## OF THE DEGREES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE.

THE different clearness of our knowledge seems to me to lie in the different ways by which the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of any of its ideas. Sometimes we perceive the agreement or disagreement of two ideas without the intervention of a third: and this we call *Intuitive Knowledge*: because here the Truth is perceived by bare Intuition, without the pains of examination and proof; thus, we perceive that a *circle* is not a *triangle*, that *three* are more than *two*, and equal to *two* and *one*. All the certainty of our knowledge depends on this Intuition; and there can be no greater: in so much, that in the next degree of knowledge, which I call *demonstrative*, this intuition in all the connexions of the intermediate ideas is necessary to attain certainty.

We cannot always by immediate comparison or juxta-position, discover the agreement or disagreement of two ideas; but perhaps remain completely ignorant, or can get no farther than probable conjecture: the mind then by the intervention of other ideas seeks to discover this agreement; and this

process is called *Reasoning*, and the knowledge we attain *demonstrative knowledge*. Thus, the mind cannot immediately perceive whether the three angles of a triangle agree with two right ones: it endeavours then to discover some other angles which shall agree with the three angles, and with two right ones, and by these intervening ideas it perceives that the three angles of a triangle and two right angles do exactly agree. These intervening ideas are called *proofs*, and a quickness in discovering and applying them is called *Sagacity*.

Though this knowledge be certain, its evidence is not so clear, nor our assent to it so ready, as in Intuitive knowledge.

In Demonstrative Knowledge there is a great abatement of that full assurance which accompanies intuitive knowledge; like a face reflected by several mirrors, where, as long as the similitude is preserved there is knowledge, but with a greater degree of dimness in every successive reflection, till its agreement with the object is not at first sight so knowable.

Each step in a chain of reasoning must have intuitive evidence, and be remembered, in order to make our knowledge certain: but as in long deductions the memory cannot always retain the proofs, this knowledge is less perfect than intuitive, and men often embrace falshood for demonstration. I imagine that the necessity of this intuition in every step of a demonstration gave rise to the axiom "that all

Reasoning was *ex Præcognitis et Præconcessis*," the falsity of which I shall have occasion to shew when I consider propositions, especially those called *maxims*.

It has generally been taken for granted that Mathematics alone are capable of demonstration; possibly from want of due method and application, and not of evidence in other parts of knowledge: for wherever the mind can by an intuitive perception of the agreement of intermediate ideas discover the agreement of two remote ideas, there is demonstration; and this privilege is not limited to ideas of Extension, Figure, Number, and their Modes.

The reason of this opinion is not only the general usefulness of that science; but because the minutest differences in numbers are so clear: and though this is not the case in Extension, yet our marks for the ideas of *number* and *figure* are clearer and more perfectly determined than ideas marked only by words. In other simple ideas, whose differences are counted by degrees, and not by quantity, the minutest variations cannot be measured, because we have no exact signs of the degrees of our sensations. Not knowing what number or motion of the particles of any body is necessary to produce a precise degree of *whiteness*, we cannot demonstrate the certain equality of any two degrees. Whatever falls short of

intuition or demonstration, with whatever assurance embraced, is but Faith or Opinion, at least in all general truths.

There is indeed another perception of the mind, concerning the particular existence of finite beings without us, which exceeding probability, but not amounting to *certainty*, passes under the name of knowledge: for some men doubt whether from the idea in our minds we can certainly infer the existence of any thing external corresponding to it, because men may have such ideas in their minds, without objects either existing or affecting their senses. But I think we have evidence that puts this past doubt: for I ask any one if he is not invincibly conscious to himself of a different perception, when he looks on the sun by day and thinks on it by night; when he actually tastes wormwood, or only thinks on its savour. There is as plain a difference between an idea revived by memory, and one immediately perceived by sense, as between any two distinct ideas.

If any one say, that in a dream ideas may arise without external objects; he may please to dream that I make him this answer—1st, No matter whether or no I remove his scruple; where all is a dream, reasoning is useless, knowledge nothing. 2dly, I believe he will allow a manifest difference between dreaming of being in the fire, and actually being in it: but should he say that this last state is

mere supposition, there being no such thing as fire without us; I reply that we certainly find pleasure or pain follow the application of certain objects whose existence we perceive, or dream that we perceive, by the senses; and this certainty is as great as our happiness or misery, beyond which we have no concern to know or to be. So that I think to the two former degrees of knowledge may be added this of the existence of particular external objects, by our consciousness of ideas derived from them; which I call *Sensitive*.

Our knowledge may not always be clear, even where our ideas are clear; because the clearness or obscurity of our knowledge consists not in that of the ideas themselves, but in our perception of their agreement or disagreement: a man may have the clearest ideas of the angles of a triangle, and of equality to two right ones, and yet but a very obscure perception of their agreement. In short, he that hath not determined ideas to the words he uses, cannot make propositions of them, of whose truth he can be certain.



## CHAP. III.

## OF THE EXTENT OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

OUR knowledge cannot exceed our ideas either in extent or perfection : and frequently it falls short of the extent of our ideas ; because we cannot find intuitive propositions to serve as proofs of the agreement or disagreement of two different ideas. It would indeed be well with us if there were not many doubts about our ideas, of which I believe we never shall be resolved. Nevertheless I do not doubt that human knowledge might be carried much farther, if men would employ as much labour about the means of discovering truth, as they do for the support of falsehood, to maintain a system, or party, they are once engaged in.

We have the ideas of a *square*, a *circle*, and *equality*, and yet shall perhaps never be able to find a circle equal to a square, and certainly know that it is so:—We have the ideas of *matter* and *thinking*, but shall possibly never know whether any material being thinks or not ; it being impossible for us, merely by the contemplation of our own ideas, to discover whether Omnipotency has not given to some systems of matter a power to perceive and think, or joined a thinking immaterial substance to matter : for, not know-

ing wherein *thinking* consists, we can almost as easily conceive matter endued with that faculty, as any other substance ; at least I see no contradiction in the supposition : though I think I have proved (chap. x. book iv.) that it is no less than a contradiction to suppose matter (which is evidently in its own nature void of sense and thought) to be *the first eternal thinking being*.

How can any one know that some perceptions, as Pleasure and Pain, do not belong to some bodies, or that they can only belong to an immaterial substance, being produced by the motion of the parts of body. As far as we can conceive, body can only affect body, and motion produce motion ; so that when we allow that motion produces pleasure or pain, or any idea of colour or sound, we quit our reason, and attribute it to the good pleasure of our maker.

I mean not to lessen the belief of the soul's immateriality : nor am I speaking here of Probability, but of Knowledge ; and I think that it becomes the modesty of philosophy not to pronounce magisterially, where we want that evidence that can produce knowledge ;—that it is of use also to discern how far our knowledge does reach ; for the present not being a state of vision, we must in many things be content with faith and probability. We need not think it strange that we are unable to attain philosophical proofs of the soul's immateriality, since all the great

ends of morality and religion are well enough secured without it; and it is evident that he who first made us sensible intelligent beings, can and will restore us the like sensibility in another state, with a capacity for retribution according to our doings in this life.

He who considers the difficulty of reconciling sensation with extended matter, or existence with any thing that has no extension, will confess he is very far from knowing certainly what his *soul* is. 'Tis past controversy, that we have something in us that thinks;—our very doubts about its nature, confirm the certainty of its being: and 'tis as vain to be sceptical in this, as it is in most other cases to be positive against the being of any thing, because we cannot comprehend its nature: for what substance has not something in it that baffles our understandings? How much must other spirits, endued with a quicker sight and larger comprehension to see and know the inward constitution of things, surpass us in knowledge and happiness!

As to Identity and Diversity, our knowledge is as extensive as our ideas, because it is all intuitive.

Our knowledge of the agreement or disagreement of our ideas in *Co-existence* is very short; though the greatest part of our knowledge of substances consists in this: the reason is, that our complex idea of a substance is made up of simple ideas which have no visible necessary connexion, so as necessarily to ex-

clude other ideas ; and these ideas too are of secondary qualities, which all depend upon the primary qualities of the minute and insensible parts of body, or on something equally remote from our comprehension. Besides this, there is no discoverable connexion between the secondary and primary qualities of bodies: we are so far from knowing what figure, size, or motion of parts produce a yellow colour, a sweet taste, or a sharp sound, that we can by no means conceive how they produce in us the ideas of colour, taste, or sound ; there is no conceivable connexion betwixt the one and the other. Our knowledge in all those inquiries reaches very little farther than our experience. Some few of the primary qualities have a necessary and visible connexion: for figure implies extension, and motion by impulse implies solidity. *Co-existence* can be no farther known than it is perceived ; and it cannot be perceived but either in particular subjects, by the observation of our senses, or in general, by the necessary connexion of the ideas themselves.

I doubt whether our knowledge of the powers of one substance to change the visible qualities of another, reaches much farther than our experience, or whether they can be inferred from those ideas which to us make its essence.

Our knowledge of substances will be little advanced by the Corpuscularian or any other hypothesis, till

we know by experience what qualities and powers have a necessary connexion and repugnancy one with another.

Of spirits we know still less, having naturally no ideas of them but what we derive from reflecting on the operations of our own souls.

That part of our knowledge which consists in perceiving the *relations of our ideas*, is so extensive, that it is hard to determine its limits: for as our advances depend on our sagacity in finding intermediate ideas, it is difficult to say when our reason has received all the helps it is capable of, for finding proofs to establish the agreement or disagreement of remote ideas. Those who are ignorant of Algebra cannot imagine the wonders that are to be done by it in this part of knowledge. I believe that ideas of quantity are not alone capable of demonstration; and that other perhaps more useful subjects of contemplation would afford us certainty, if vices, passions, and domineering influence did not oppose or menace such endeavours.

“ The idea of a supreme Being, infinite in power, goodness, and wisdom, whose workmanship we are, and on whom we depend; and the Idea of ourselves, as understanding rational beings, being such as are clear in us, would, I suppose, if duly considered and pursued, afford such foundations of our duty and rules of action as might place *Morality amongst the*

*Sciences capable of Demonstration* : wherein I doubt not, but from self-evident propositions, by necessary consequences, as incontestable as those in mathematics, the measures of Right and Wrong might be made out to any one that will apply himself with the same indifferency and attention to the one, as he does to the other of these sciences. The *Relation* of other *Modes* may certainly be perceived, as well as those of Number and Extension : and I cannot see why they should not also be capable of demonstration, if due methods were thought on to examine or pursue their agreement or disagreement. *Where there is no Property, there is no Injustice*, is a proposition as certain as any demonstration in Euclid : for the idea of property being *a Right to any thing*; and the idea, to which the name injustice is given, being *the Invasion or Violation of that Right*; it is evident, that these ideas being thus established, and these names annexed to them, I can as certainly know this proposition to be true, as that a triangle has three angles equal to two right ones. Again, *No Government allows absolute Liberty* : The idea of government being *the Establishment of the Society upon certain Rules or Laws*, which require conformity to them ; and the idea of absolute liberty being *for any one to do whatever he pleases*; I am as capable of being certain of the truth of this proposition as of any in the mathematics.

That which in this respect has given the advantage to the ideas of quantity, and made them thought more capable of certainty and demonstration, is,

1st, That they can be set down and represented by *sensible marks*, which have a greater and nearer correspondence with them than any words or sounds whatsoever. Diagrams drawn on paper are copies of the ideas in the mind, and not liable to the uncertainty that words carry in their signification. An angle, circle, or square, drawn in lines, lies open to the view, and cannot be mistaken: It remains unchangeable, and may at leisure be considered and examined, and the demonstration be revised, and all the parts of it may be gone over more than once, without any danger of the least change in the ideas. This cannot be thus done in *moral Ideas*; we have *no sensible marks* that resemble them, whereby we can set them down; we have nothing but words to express them by; which though, when written, they remain the same, yet the Ideas they stand for may change in the same man; and 'tis very seldom that they are not different in different persons.

2dly, Another thing that makes the greater difficulty in Ethics, is, that *moral Ideas* are commonly more complex than those of the Figures ordinarily considered in mathematics. From whence these two inconveniences follow. *First*, That their

are of more uncertain signification; the precision of simple ideas they stand for not being so agreed on; and so the sign that is used for in communication always, and in thinking often, not steadily carry with it the same idea. Upon the same disorder, confusion and error follows, should if a man, going to demonstrate something heptagon, should in the diagram he took to leave out one of the angles, or by over-sight the figure with one angle more than the name merely imported, or he intended it should, when he thought of his demonstration. This often happens, and is hardly avoidable in very complex ideas, where the same name being retained, one simple idea is left out or put in a complex one, (still called by the same name) at one time than another. *Secondly*, From the confusedness of these moral ideas there follows great inconvenience, viz. that the mind cannot retain those precise combinations, so exactly perfectly as is necessary in the examination of habitudes and correspondences, agreements or disagreements, of several of them one with another; especially where it is to be judged of by long deduction and the intervention of several other complex ideas to shew the agreement or disagreement of two simple ones.

There is a great help against this, which mathematicians



find in diagrams and figures, which remain unalterable in their draughts, is very apparent; and the memory would often have great difficulty otherwise to retain them so exactly, whilst the mind went over the parts of them, step by step, to examine their several correspondences: And though in casting up a long sum, either in addition, multiplication, or division, every part be only a progression of the mind, taking a view of its own ideas, and considering their agreement or disagreement; and the resolution of the question be nothing but the result of the whole, made up of such particulars, whereof the mind has a clear perception; yet without setting down the several parts by marks, whose precise significations are known, and by marks that last and remain in view when the memory had let them go, it would be almost impossible to carry so many different ideas in mind, without confounding or letting slip some parts of the reckoning, and thereby making all our reasonings about it useless. In which case, the cyphers or marks help not the mind at all to perceive the agreement of any two or more numbers, their equalities or proportions: That the mind has only by intuition of its own ideas of the numbers themselves. But the numerical characters are helps to the memory, to record and retain the several ideas about which the demonstration is made, whereby a man may know how far his intuitive knowledge, in

ying several of the particulars, has proceeded; so he may, without confusion, go on to what is unknown, and at last have in one view before him result of all his perceptions and reasonings.

ne part of these disadvantages in moral ideas, h has made them be thought not capable of onstration, may in a good measure be remedied enitions, *setting down thāi collection of simple s, which every term shall stand for, and using the terms steadily and constantly for precise collection.* And what methods algebra smething of that kind, may hereafter suggest, to ove the other difficulties, is not easy to foretel. fident I am, that if men would in the same me-, and with the same indifferency, search after al as they do mathematical truths, they would them to have a stronger connexion one with her, and a more necessary consequence from our r and distinct ideas, and to come nearer perfect onstration, than is commonly imagined. But h of this is not to be expected, whilst the desire steem, riches, or power, makes men espouse the l endowed opinions in fashion, and then seek argu-nts, either to make good their beauty, or varnish over cover their deformity. Nothing being so beau-l to the eye as truth is to the mind; nothing so de-med and irreconcilable to the understanding as a lye. r though many a man can with satisfaction enough

own a no very handsome wife in his bosom; yet who is bold enough openly to avow that he has espoused a falsehood, and received into his breast so ugly a thing as a lye? Whilst the parties of men cram their tenets down all men's throats, whom they can get into their power, without permitting them to examine their truth or falsehood, and will not let truth have fair play in the world, nor men the liberty to search after it, what improvements can be expected of this kind? what greater light can be hoped for in the moral sciences? The subject part of mankind, in most places, might, instead thereof, with Ægyptian bondage, expect Ægyptian darkness, were not the candle of the Lord set up by himself in men's minds, which it is impossible for the breath or power of man wholly to extinguish."

As to the fourth sort of knowledge, that of the *actual existence of things*,—we have an *intuitive* knowledge of our own existence, a *demonstrative* knowledge of the existence of a God, and but a *sensitive* knowledge of the existence of any thing else.

Our ignorance being infinitely greater than our knowledge, a view of it may serve much to the quieting of disputes and the improvement of useful knowledge: if discovering how far we have clear and distinct ideas, we confine our thoughts to the contemplation of those things that are within the reach of our understandings, and do not presumptuously

launch out into that abyss of darkness, where we have not eyes to see, nor faculties to perceive any thing.

The causes of our ignorance will be found to be chiefly these three;—want of ideas,—want of a discoverable connexion between our ideas,—and want of tracing and examining our ideas.

Considering the vast extent of being, our inlets to knowledge are few and narrow; but this is no argument against the existence of other creatures with senses and faculties more numerous and perfect than ours: for as well might a blind man be positive that there was no such thing as sight and colour. He who considers the infinite attributes of the Deity, will find reason to think them not all laid out upon so inconsiderable a creature as man, who is in all probability one of the lowest of intellectual beings.

Besides those ideas which our faculties cannot give us, we frequently want ideas that we are capable of. We have ideas of bulk, figure, and motion, but not knowing what is the particular bulk, figure and motion of the greatest part of the bodies in the Universe, we are ignorant of the several powers and ways of operation, whereby the effects we daily see are produced. These are hid from us in some things by being too remote, and in others by being too minute. Not being able to discover the mechanical affections of the minuter parts of bodies, we can have

no other assurance of them than some few trials will give ; but whether they will succeed again another time, we cannot be certain : hence we have very few universal truths concerning natural bodies ; and our reason carries us very little beyond particular matter of fact.

If such is our ignorance of material beings, how much less can we know any thing of the intellectual world of spirits ; certainly a greater and more beautiful world than this, but of which we can frame no distinct ideas. Excepting a few superficial ideas of spirit, which we get by reflecting on our own spirit, and thence of the Author of all spirits, we have no certain information about it but by Revelation. Every thinking man has reason to be satisfied that other men have minds as well as himself ; and the knowledge of his own mind cannot suffer him to be ignorant of a God : but who can know that there are degrees of spirits between us and God.

Again, we are incapable of Universal and Certain Knowledge wherever we cannot discover the connexion between our ideas ; and as before, are left to the confined way of observation and experiment. The mechanical affections of bodies having no affinity with the ideas they produce, we can have no knowledge of them beyond our experience : and can only reason about them as incomprehensible effects produced by the appointment of an infinitely wise

agent: for there is no conceivable connexion between the impulse of a body and the perception of a colour or smell; that is, between the primary qualities of body, and our ideas of its secondary qualities. On the other side, it is as inconceivable how any *thought* should produce a *motion* in body, as how any *body* should produce a *thought* in the mind: constant experience alone convinces us of the fact, and not any connexion or necessary dependance of the ideas.

Some of our ideas seem so plainly to include certain relations in their own nature, that we cannot conceive them separable; and in these only are we capable of certain and universal knowledge: thus, the idea of a *right lined triangle* necessarily implies an equality of its angles to two right ones. This connexion is such that we cannot conceive it mutable or dependant on any arbitrary power.

As far as our observation teaches us that things proceed regularly, that certain effects constantly flow from certain causes, we may conclude that they act by some determined Law, though we know it not. In most things our knowledge extends no farther than particular experience of matter of fact; and by analogy we guess that at other times like causes will produce like effects.

Lastly, many truths are concealed from us not by any imperfection of our faculties, but by want of

application to discover, examine, and compare those intermediate ideas which may shew us the habitudes of things.

The ill use of words *has* contributed most to hinder the *due* tracing of our ideas. Mathematicians accustoming themselves to consider ideas and not sounds, have avoided much of that perplexity, which has been the misfortune of a great part of the men of letters, and has made the stock of real knowledge bear so little proportion to the schools, disputes, and writings, with which the world has been filled.

We have hitherto examined the extent of our knowledge with respect to *the sorts of things*; we shall now consider its universality. When we perceive *the relation of abstract ideas*, our Knowledge is Universal: for what is known of such general ideas will be true of every particular thing in which that Essence (i. e. the abstract idea) is to be found.

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#### CHAP. IV.

##### OF THE REALITY OF KNOWLEDGE.

MY reader may perhaps object that, if knowledge consists in the perception of the agreement or disagreement of our ideas, the visions of an enthusiast,

and the reasonings of a sober man will be equally certain: that a knowledge of men's own imaginations is nothing to a man that enquires after the reality of things.

I answer, that if our knowledge reach no farther than our ideas, where something farther is intended, our most serious thoughts will be little more than the reveries of a crazy brain: but I hope yet to shew that the knowledge of our own ideas gives us an assurance greater than bare imagination: and that it affords us all the certainty we can have of general Truths.

The mind knows not things immediately, but only by the intervention of its ideas: our knowledge therefore is only real, so far as there is a conformity between our ideas and the reality of things. The difficulty then is to find the criterion of this conformity; since the mind perceives nothing but its own ideas.

I think we may be assured that two sorts of our Ideas agree with things. 1st, We have shewn that the mind cannot make to itself any simple ideas: which are the effects of things operating naturally, and producing those perceptions which the will of our maker has appointed. 2dly, All our complex ideas, except of substances, being themselves archetypes, can never be capable of a wrong representation, because they are compared with nothing.

Our knowledge of Mathematical Truths is no



doubt certain and real; yet we shall find that it is only the knowledge of ideas. A mathematician considers the properties of a rectangle or circle only as they exist in his mind; for perhaps he never found either of them existing precisely true: yet his knowledge of their properties is certain, because his reasonings relate no farther to such figures really existing, than as the figures themselves agree with their archetypes, which are his own ideas. Hence moral knowledge is equally capable of demonstration; our moral ideas being themselves archetypes, and of course adequate and complete.

Most of the discourses of those who enquire after Truth consist of general propositions and notions, in which existence is not at all concerned: for the demonstrations and maxims of Mathematicians and Moralists will be equally true in speculation, i. e. in idea, though there exist no Figures or Characters exactly conformable to their ideas. But it may be said, that if moral ideas are of our own making, our notions of virtue and vice will be very confused—no more than in Mathematicks, where if you keep the same precise idea, the figure being once drawn and seen makes the name of no force. Let a man have a clear idea that *Injustice* is the taking from others, without their consent, what by honest industry they have acquired, and he will not be misled by another person's giving the name of *justice* to the

same idea. In moral discourses indeed wrong names usually breed more disorder, because it is not so easy to give a correct definition as to draw a correct figure.

Where God or any other Law-maker has defined moral names, there they become the essence of a species, and it is not safe to nick-name them.

Complex ideas of substances being referred to archetypes, our knowledge of them may not be real; for it is not sufficient that they consist of possible combinations of simple ideas; but the combinations must be actual. As far as our ideas are true, though perhaps not exact copies, so far our knowledge is real: but this knowledge does not extend far.

Whatever simple ideas have been found co-existing in any substance, these we may with confidence join again, and so make abstract ideas of substances; whence we get general knowledge.

If we did not confine our thoughts so much to names, we should think of things with greater freedom and less confusion. It would be thought a bold paradox, if not a dangerous falshood, should I say that a changeling, who has lived forty years together without any appearance of reason, is something between a man and a beast:—which prejudice is founded upon the supposition of a certain number of real essences, and that there can be no species between them of a different essence;—though the

idea of the shape, motion, and life of a man without reason, is as much that of a distinct species from man, or beast, as the idea of the shape of an ass with reason would be.

But some men's zeal enables them to see religion threatened, whenever one quits their forms of speaking: and no doubt it will be asked, what will become of this new species of changelings in the other world. I answer it concerns not me to enquire: they are in the hands of a bountiful father who does not dispose of his creatures according to our narrow opinions:—we who know so little of the present world need not be peremptory in defining the different states of creatures in another: it suffices that he has made known a future state of retribution to all who are capable of instruction.

This question is founded upon one of two false suppositions;—first, that whatever has the outward appearance of a man, is designed for immortality; or secondly, that whatever is of human birth must be so. I never heard of any one who allowed such excellency to the figure of any mass of matter, as to affirm eternal life due to it:—such an opinion places immortality in a superficial figure, and wholly excludes all consideration of soul or spirit, by which alone some corporeal beings have hitherto been concluded immortal.

It will perhaps be said, that no one supposed the

shape to make a thing immortal, but only to be the sign of a rational immortal soul within. This wants proof: for we may as rationally conclude that the dead body of a man possesses a living soul, because of its shape, as that a changeling has a rational soul, because he has the outside of a rational creature. Again, I know not by what logic it is concluded, that what is the issue of rational parents must have a rational soul. Men destroy mis-shaped productions, or monsters;—shall a defect then in the body make a monster, and a defect in the mind (the far more noble, and, in the common phrase, essential part,) not? I should like to know then what are those precise lineaments which are not capable of being united with a rational soul.

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CHAP. V.

OF TRUTH IN GENERAL.

**WHAT** is Truth, was an enquiry many ages since. As all men pretend to seek it, we have good reason carefully to examine its nature, and observe how it is distinguished from falsehood.

I consider Truth to be the joining and separating of signs, as the things signified by them agree or disagree one with another; which is the making of *Pro-*

*positions*: and those are of two sorts, *mental* and *verbal*.

Though in order to form a clear notion of Truth, it is necessary to consider *Truth of thought* distinct from *Truth of words*, yet we must treat of mental propositions in words, so that they become verbal.

What makes it more difficult to treat them separately is, that most men in reasoning with themselves use words instead of ideas, when the subject of their meditation contains complex ideas, because these ideas are generally confused and undetermined. Many who talk much of *religion* and *conscience*, of *church* and *faith*, of *power* and *right*, &c. would perhaps have little left in their meditations, if one should desire them to think only of the things themselves, and lay by those words with which they so often confound others, and not seldom themselves.

A *mental Proposition* is the joining or separating of ideas in the mind:—a *verbal proposition* is the joining or separating of words in affirmative or negative sentences.

*Truth* may be distinguished into *verbal* and *real*. Verbal Truth is the use of terms according to the agreement or disagreement of our ideas, without considering whether these ideas have an existence in nature. Real Truth is the use of signs according to the relation of those ideas which agree with the reality of things.

*Falsehood* is the marking down in words the agreement or disagreement of ideas otherwise than it is.

General Truths are most sought for; as by their comprehensiveness they enlarge our view and shorten our way to knowledge.

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## CHAP. VI.

### OF UNIVERSAL PROPOSITIONS, THEIR TRUTH AND CERTAINTY.

**THE** prevailing custom of using Sounds for Ideas makes the consideration of Words and Propositions so necessary a part of the treatise of knowledge, that it is very hard to speak intelligibly of the one without explaining the other.

As our knowledge of General Truths cannot well be made known, and is seldom apprehended, but as conceived and expressed in words, it will be our business to enquire into the truth and certainty of universal propositions.

Not to be misled by the doubtfulness of terms, which is the danger every where, we must observe that certainty is of two kinds,—of Truth, and of Knowledge.—*Certainty of truth* is the putting of

words together in propositions so as exactly to express the agreement or disagreement of the ideas they signify. *Certainty of knowledge* is the perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas as expressed in any proposition.—To be certain of the truth of any general proposition we must know the essence of each species its terms stand for. This we may easily do in all *simple ideas* and *modes*, because the real and nominal essence is the same, that is, the abstract idea, which the general term denotes, is the sole essence. But in *substances* a real essence distinct from the nominal being supposed to determine the species, the extent of the general term is uncertain. If men would apply general terms strictly to the nominal essence alone, there would be no doubt about the truth of propositions.

I have chosen to use the scholastic terms *essences* and *species* on purpose to shew the absurdity of thinking them any other realities than abstract ideas with names affixed to them. I might perhaps have treated of these things in a better and clearer way, but that I thought it necessary to discover and remove those wrong notions of essences or species which the prevalence of scholastic learning has too generally inculcated.

*The names of substances* when used as they should be, for the ideas men have in their minds, carry a clear and determinate signification with them; but

will not serve for universal propositions of whose truth we can be certain; because their complex ideas are such combinations of simple ones as have no discoverable connexion or repugnancy but with very few other ideas. No one, I think, can certainly know from the colour of any body what smell, taste, sound, or tangible qualities it has, or what alterations it is capable of making on or receiving from other bodies.

How much the being and operation of particular substances in this our globe depend on causes utterly beyond our view, it is impossible for us to determine. The parts of this stupendous universe may have such a connexion, that the things of this Earth would cease to be what they are, if some incomprehensibly remote star should cease to move or be as it is.

Inquisitive and observing men may by strength of judgment, and on probabilities taken from wary observation, often guess right at what experience has not discovered: but this still is only opinion and not knowledge. Let our abstract idea of *man* be a body of such a shape, with sense, voluntary motion, and reason; and we cannot with certainty affirm that all men sleep by intervals;—no man can be nourished by wood or stones;—all men will be poisoned by hemlock—because these ideas have no necessary connexion or repugnancy with the nominal essence or abstract idea.



## CHAP. VII.

## OF MAXIMS.

**MAXIMS** and Axioms have passed for principles of science; and being self-evident have been supposed innate. Several other truths, not allowed to be axioms, are equally self-evident.

1st, The immediate perception of *Identity* or *Diversity*, being founded in the mind's having distinct ideas, affords as many self-evident propositions as we have distinct ideas: for we need only understand the terms to perceive the truth of what is affirmed or denied concerning the agreement or disagreement of the ideas:—that a *man* is not a *horse*, that *blue* is not *red*, is as self-evident as that *what-ever is, is*.

2dly, Of *Co-existence*, or such necessary connexion between two ideas that the existence of one always supposes that of the other, we have but few intuitive ideas. The idea of *filling a place equal to the contents of its superficies* being annexed to our idea of *body*, I think this proposition intuitive; “that two bodies cannot be in the same place.”

3dly, As to the *relations of modes*, Mathematicians have framed many axioms concerning that of equality: as *Equals taken from equals, the re-*

*mainders will be equal.* Though these are unquestionable Truths, many propositions may be found in numbers, equally if not more clear ; as that *one and one are equal to two.*

4thly, As to *real existence*, that idea having no connexion with any others than those of *self* and a *first being*, we have not even demonstrative, much less intuitive knowledge.

The Rules established in the schools, that all reasonings are *ex præcognitis et præconcessis*, seem to make these maxims the foundation of all knowledge. I suppose they mean that these truths are the first known to the mind, and are the basis of all the other parts of knowledge.

We have shewn in Chap. 2. Book 1. that these are not the truths first known to the mind. A child certainly knows *that a stranger is not its mother*, long before it knows that *'tis impossible for the same thing to be, and not to be.* It is evident that our first ideas are those of particular things; and that abstract ideas are only rendered obvious by constant and familiar use, being fictions of the mind. Does it not require some pains to form the general idea of a triangle? for it must be neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once. In short, it is something imperfect, that cannot exist,—an idea comprising some parts of several different and inconsistent ideas :—yet

the mind, in this imperfect state, has need of these ideas for the communication and enlargement of knowledge.

From what has been said it follows that these Maxims are not the foundation of all our knowledge. Cannot we know that *one and two are equal to three*, without knowing that the *whole is equal to all its parts taken together*? indeed if there be any odds, the ideas *whole* and *parts* are more obscure than those of *one, two, three*. Scholastic men talk much of the maxims on which the sciences are built: but it has been my ill luck never to meet with any such sciences. Axioms may serve to silence wranglers, and put an end to dispute. When we find out an idea, by whose intervention we discover the connexion of two others, this is a revelation from God to us, by the voice of reason. When God declares any truth to us, this is a revelation by the voice of his spirit. But in neither of these do we receive our knowledge from maxims; which are of no use in the discovery of unknown truths.

Mr. Newton, in his never enough to be admired book, has demonstrated several propositions, which are so many new truths and advances in Mathematical knowledge; but was not assisted by any such general maxims.

When schools were erected, and Professors taught what others had discovered, Axioms were laid down

to be settled in the minds of their scholars, in order to convince them of truths in particular instances, which were not so familiar to them as the Axioms they had learnt: though these particular truths, when well reflected on, are no less self-evident than the axioms themselves. The schools making disputation the touchstone of men's abilities, and the criterion of knowledge, adjudged the victory to him that kept the field: but as skilful combatants could always run out into an endless train of syllogisms, certain general propositions, mostly self-evident, were introduced into the schools; and these, being allowed by all, directed and limited the excursions of the disputants. Though it was accounted a glory in the schools obstinately to maintain any side of a question, even after conviction, I think the rational part of mankind will scarcely believe that such a practice could be admitted among the lovers of Truth and students of Religion or Nature: a practice likely to turn men's minds from the sincere search and love of Truth, and to make them doubt whether there be any such thing, at least, that is worth adhering to.

It is one thing to shew a man that he is in an error, and another to put him in possession of truth: but what truths can these maxims teach us, which are only about identical predications? Our knowledge begins with particulars, and gradually rises to generals: but we take afterwards the quite contrary course,

draw our knowledge into general propositions, and have recourse to them as the standards of truth and falsehood. Hence we get a habit of supposing that particular propositions derive their truth and evidence from their conformity with general ones.

Unless we have correct and settled notions of things, general maxims will confirm us in mistakes, and serve to prove contradictions. He who with Des Cartes shall consider Body to be nothing but Extension, may easily demonstrate that there is no vacuum : and he who considers Body as possessing both extension and solidity, may as easily demonstrate that there is a vacuum. A child making *whiteness* one of the constant simple ideas in his complex one of *man*, may demonstrate by the maxim "it is impossible for the same to be and not to be," that a *negro* is not a *man*.

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## CHAP. VIII.

### OF TRIFLING PROPOSITIONS.

**ALL** purely Identical Propositions contain no instruction in them : though they may sometimes serve to shew a man the absurdity he is guilty of, when by circumlocution or equivocal terms he denies the same thing of itself ; because no one will affirm visible contradictions in plain words. By *identical*

*propositions* I mean such only, where the same term, importing the same idea, is affirmed of itself.

Another sort of trifling is when a part of a complex idea is predicated of the name of the whole,—a part of the definition of the word defined. Such are all propositions wherein the genus is predicated of the species,—more comprehensive of less comprehensive terms. What information does the proposition “Lead is a metal,” convey to a man who knows the complex idea signified by the word *Lead*? since all the simple ideas comprised in the term *metal* were comprehended in the name *Lead*. To one indeed who knew the meaning of the word *metal* and not of the word *lead*, such a proposition is a shorter explanation than the enumeration of its simple ideas *heaviness*, *fusibility*, *malleability*.

To predicate any part of the definition of the term defined,—one of its simple ideas of the complex one,—is also trifling: as, “all gold is fusible;” for *fusibility* is a simple idea comprehended in the name *gold*, and the signification of that name is supposed to be understood. Such propositions may serve to remind a disingenuous reasoner of the definition of his own terms; and are necessary in those cases where the hearer is not supposed to understand the terms used by the speaker.

Those propositions contain instructive truth, where something is affirmed of another, which is

a necessary consequence of its precise complex idea, but not contained in it: as "the external angle of all triangles is bigger than either of the opposite internal angles;" for this relation of the outward angle makes no part of the complex idea of a triangle.

We know so little of the real nature of things, and hence of what combinations of simple ideas may co-exist in substances, that general propositions concerning them are for the most part trifling and uncertain.

The worst sort of trifling, however, is the vague use of words; owing either to inadvertency, or to a desire of sheltering ignorance under obscurity of Language.

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## CHAP. IX.

### OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF EXISTENCE.

**H**ITHERTO we have considered only the essences of things, or our own ideas abstracted from all particular existence. Universal propositions, of whose truth or falsehood we can have certain knowledge, do not concern existence: but all particular propositions, which if made general would not be

certain, concern only existence: for they declare the accidental union or separation of ideas in things existing, which in their abstract natures have no known necessary connexion or repugnancy.

But leaving the nature of propositions to be considered elsewhere, let us enquire concerning our knowledge of Existence. I say then, we know our own existence by *Intuition*; the existence of God by *Demonstration*; and that of other things by *Sensation*.

We perceive our own existence so certainly, that it is not capable of being proved. I cannot doubt of all other things, without perceiving my own existence: for my perception of the existence of the *thing doubting* is as certain as my perception of the *thought* called *doubt*.

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## CHAP. X.

### OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXISTENCE OF A GOD.

**THOUGH** God has not given us any innate ideas of himself, he has furnished us with faculties to know him so far as is necessary to the end of our being. Though this be the most obvious truth that



reason discovers, and I think, evident even to mathematical certainty, yet without attention and a regular deduction of it from some part of our intuitive knowledge, we may be as ignorant of this as of other demonstrable propositions.

I think it beyond a question, that man has a clear perception of his own being ; and that he knows intuitively, "that nothing cannot produce something." Hence it is evident that from eternity there has been something ; since what was not from eternity had a beginning, and what had a beginning must be produced by something else.

Again, the source of all being must be the source of all the powers and properties of that being ; therefore that Eternal Being must be most powerful and most knowing.

From this idea duly considered we may deduce all those other attributes, which we ought to ascribe to this Eternal Being : but should any one be so senselessly arrogant as to suppose man alone knowing and wise, and yet the product of mere ignorance and chance, I leave with him that very rational and emphatical rebuke of Tully ; (*de Leg. lib. 2*) : " what can be more silly arrogant and misbecoming than for a man to think that he has a mind and understanding in him, but that in all the Universe besides there is no such thing ? or that those things, which with the utmost stretch of his reason

e can scarce comprehend, should be moved and managed without any reason at all." *Quid est enim erius quàm neminem esse oportere tam stulte arrogantem, ut in se mentem et rationem putet inesse, a coelo mundoque non putet? aut ea, quæ vix umma ingenii ratione comprehendat, nulla ratione noverì putet?*

From what has been said, I think our knowledge of the existence of a God more certain than of any thing not immediately discovered to us by our senses; nay, than that any thing exists without us. I would not however lay the whole stress of so important a point upon the sole foundation of our idea of a most perfect being; for different arguments prevail with different minds in confirmation of the same truth: and it is evident that some men have none, some worse than none, and the most very different ideas of God.

Instead therefore of endeavouring to invalidate all other arguments, drawn from our own existence, and the sensible parts of the universe, I deem them too cogent for a considering man to withstand: I think no truth more clear than this "that the invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

We know or conceive but of two sorts of beings; those purely material or incogitative, void of sense, perception, or thought, as the parings of our nails, &c. and those immaterial or cogitative, as we find ourselves to be. The Eternal Being must be a Cogitative Being: for it is as impossible to conceive *incogitative matter* to produce an *intelligent being*, as to conceive matter produced from nothing. Let us suppose a Pebble eternal, and its parts closely united, and at rest together:—were there no other being, must it not remain eternally dead and inactive? It cannot produce any thing, not even motion in itself. But let us suppose motion eternal too;—can *incogitative matter and motion*, under whatever changes of figure and bulk, ever produce *thought*? and it is impossible to suppose *thought* eternally inseparable from *matter*, either with or without motion. Though we generally speak of *matter* as of one thing, yet in reality all matter is not one individual thing; nor do we know of any such thing as one single body. If matter therefore were the *eternal first cogitative being*, there would be an infinite number of eternal finite cogitative beings, independent one of another, of limited force and distinct thoughts; which could never produce that order, harmony and beauty, that is to be found in nature. Since then *the first eternal being* must be

cogitative, and must contain in itself all the perfections it communicates, that Being cannot be matter.

Perhaps it will be said, that it does not necessarily follow that the Eternal Thinking Being is immaterial. Be it so: still it is certain that there is a God. But the danger and deceit of this supposition lies here:—men devoted to matter, unable to avoid the demonstration of an eternal knowing being, would have it granted that this being is material, and thence would argue that all is matter, and so deny a God:—which destroys their own hypothesis:—for, since the existence of an eternal cogitative being must be granted, they manifestly separate *matter* and *thinking*, suppose no necessary connexion between them, and so establish the necessity of an eternal spirit. Now if *thinking* and *matter* may be separated, the eternal existence of matter will not follow from the eternal existence of a cogitative being.

These men will scarce say that every particle of matter thinks; since there would then be an infinity of Gods: and yet if every particle of matter be not cogitative, it will be as hard to make a cogitative being out of incogitative particles, as an extended being out of unextended parts.

Again, will they say that one eternal atom of matter thinks? then this alone, by its powerful will or thought, made the rest of matter: which the

materialists will not allow: so that any how these men must give up their great maxim. "*Ex nihilo nihil fit.*"

If neither one peculiar atom can be this eternal thinking being, nor all the particles of matter together, then it only remains to suppose this being to be *some certain system of matter*; which I imagine is the most common notion the materialists entertain of God; being naturally suggested to them by their ideas of their own nature. This notion however is not less absurd than the others, for it ascribes the knowledge of an eternal being to *the juxta-position of unthinking particles of matter*; and these however put together, can receive nothing new but relation of position, which can never give thought.

If this corporeal system have all its parts at rest, it is but one lump, and can have no privileges above one atom. If its thinking depends on the motion of its parts, all its thoughts must be accidental and limited; for each particle is singly incogitative, and cannot regulate its own motions, nor be regulated by the thought of the whole; thought being here supposed the consequence and not the cause of motion.

Some who allow an eternal, cogitative, immaterial Being, suppose matter also to be eternal; and so deny God his first great piece of workmanship, the

**Creation.** If matter must be supposed eternal, because you cannot conceive it made out of nothing, why not conceive yourself eternal? you say, *you* began to be so many years ago; that is, not the matter, but the fashion of it called your Body, then began to be; but that frame of particles is not *you*: when then, I say, did the thinking thing *you* begin to be? If never; you have existed from eternity: an absurdity I need not confute. If you can allow a *thinking thing*, why not allow a material being, to be made out of nothing, by an equal power? but that you have experience of the first, and not of the second.

Besides it is not reasonable to deny the power of an infinite being, because we cannot comprehend its operations. We do not deny effects here, because we cannot conceive the manner of their production. We cannot conceive how any thing but impulse of body can move body: yet this is not a sufficient reason for us to deny it possible, against the constant experience of it in our own voluntary motions; which are the effects of the free action or thought of our minds only, and not of the impulse of blind matter on our bodies; for then it would be in our power or choice to alter it.

When you can explain how by my will, by a thought of my mind, my right hand moves and my left hand rests, the next step will be to understand

creation. In the mean time, it is an over-valuing of ourselves to reduce all things to the narrow measure of our capacities, and to conclude that impossible to be done, the manner of doing which exceeds our comprehension: it is to make our comprehension infinite, or God finite, when what he can do is limited to what we can conceive. If we understand not the operations of our finite minds, let us not expect to comprehend the infinite mind.

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## CHAP. X:

### OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXISTENCE OF OTHER THINGS.

**O**UR knowledge of the existence of any thing, except God and ourselves, comes only by sensation; for as there is no necessary connexion of *real existence* with any *idea* a man has in his memory, the existence of any other being is only known to him, when it actually operates on him so as to make itself perceived. The idea of any thing no more proves the existence of that thing, than the picture of a man proves his existence, or than the visions of a dream make a true history.

The notice we have by our senses of the existence

of things without us, though not altogether so certain as our intuitive knowledge, or as the deductions of our reason from the clear abstract ideas of our own minds, is yet an assurance that deserves the name of Knowledge. I think no one can seriously be so sceptical as to doubt of the existence of those things which he sees and feels: such an one at least will never have any controversy with me, since he can never be sure that I say any thing contrary to his opinion. I think that I have assurance enough of the existence of external things, since by their different application I can produce in myself both pleasure and pain, which is one great concern of my present state. We cannot talk of knowledge itself but by the help of those faculties which are fitted to apprehend what knowledge is.

1st, Our perceptions are produced in us by exterior causes affecting our senses; because those that want the organs of any sense never can have the ideas belonging to that sense: for if the organs themselves produced them, the eyes of a man in the dark would produce colours.

2dly, Because Ideas from actual sensation, and those from memory, are very distinct perceptions: for when my eyes are shut, I can at pleasure call to my mind the ideas of *light* or the *sun*, or banish them, and take into my view other ideas; but if I actually turn my eyes towards the Sun, I cannot



avoid the ideas which the light or sun ~~than~~ produces. If these ideas were only in my memory, I should always have the same power to lay them by at pleasure.

3dly, Because many ideas are produced in us with pain, which are afterwards remembèred without the least offence: thus *heat* and *cold* as ideas revivèd in the mind give no pain, though felt in a certain degree they are very troublesome. We remember the pains of *hunger*, *thirst*, or the *head-ache*, without any pain at all: but if these were mere ideas in the mind, they would either never or constantly disturb us, whenever thought of. The same may be said of pleasure. Though mathematical demonstrations depend not on sense; yet to examine them by diagrams seems to give to the evidence of sight a certainty bordering on demonstration: for it would be strange that a man should allow one angle of a figure to be undeniably bigger ~~than~~ another, and yet doubt the existence of the lines and angles of that diagram by which the figure was measured.

4thly, Because our senses in many cases bear witness to the truth of each others report. He whose sight will not convince him of the existence of a fire may feel it; and if the fire be a mere idea, he will feel no pain, unless pain be a fancy too. The characters I make on this paper do not cease to be with the thoughts that gave rise to them, but constantly af-

fect my senses in a similar way: and if, when presented to the sight of another man, they draw from him such sounds as I before-hand designed, there will be little reason to doubt that these characters exist out of my imagination.

If after all any one will be so sceptical as to affirm that all we see and hear, feel and taste, think and do, during our whole being, is but the series of a long dream, and will therefore question the existence of all things, I must desire him to consider that he only dreams he makes the question, and it matters not that a waking man should answer him. Yet, if he please, he may dream that I make him this answer; that the certainty of the real existence of things, by the testimony of our senses, is as great as our frame admits, or our condition needs: because it suffices to give us notice of those things that are convenient or inconvenient to us, painful or pleasant. Our knowledge however of the real existence of things extends no farther than the present testimony of our senses about particular objects; for there is no necessary connexion of a man's existence now with his existence a minute hence: by a thousand ways he may cease to be: yet it is reasonable for me to do many things in the confidence that men do exist whom I do not see, though I act merely on probability not on knowledge.

Here we may observe how foolish it is for men

who have reason to judge of evidence, to expect demonstration in things not capable of it, and refuse their assent to very rational propositions, because they are not evident beyond all pretence for doubting. He that would admit of nothing but demonstration, would be sure of nothing but to perish quickly, since he is not certain that his meat or drink will be wholesome. We know the past existence of things, as far as our memories retain the ideas of them.

Though we have ideas of spirits, our senses do not discover to us any such creatures existing without us: but from revelation and other evidence we may be assured that such beings do exist. In this, as in several other things we must content ourselves with the evidence of Faith: universal certain propositions are beyond our reach.

It appears from what has been said, that there are two sorts of propositions: 1st, concerning the existence of particular things answerable to our ideas; and 2dly, concerning the relation of our abstract deas. From these last are formed certain general propositions, which may be called *eternal verities*; not that they are imprinted on the mind from any patterns that pre-existed out of the mind, but that they are necessarily acknowledged by any one who has the ideas; the same ideas having immutably the same habitudes to one another. This proposition,

however certain, " that men ought to fear and obey God" proves not the existence of men in the world, but will be true of all such creatures, whenever they do exist.

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## CHAP. XII.

### OF THE IMPROVEMENT OF OUR KNOWLEDGE.

WHAT gave rise to Maxims, as the foundation of all the sciences, was probably their seeming use in Mathematics: which science, for its great clearness and evidence was by pre-eminence called *Μαθηματα* and *Μαθησις*, things learnt, or learning. Yet I think any one will find upon consideration, that the certainty men arrived at in this Science was not owing to the influence of two or three general maxims, but to the distinct and compleat ideas on which they reflected, and to the intuitive knowledge they had of the relations of excess and equality between some of their ideas, which led to the discovery of the relations of others.

I desire any one to consider, from what has been elsewhere said, which is first and best known to most people,—the particular instance, or the general rule; and which gives birth to the other.—*General*

*rules* are but comparisons of our more general and abstract ideas, made by the mind, in order to draw into comprehensive terms and short rules its various and multiplied observations: *particulars* were the foundation of our knowledge; though perhaps not noticed afterwards by the mind; which for its own ease is most attentive to lay up general notions and disburthen itself of particulars.

Our present enquiry however is, whether it be safe to adopt the principles of one science as unquestionable in all others. If it be, I know not what may not pass for truth in Morality, and be introduced and proved in Natural Philosophy.

“ Let that principle of some of the philosophers, that all is matter, and that there is nothing else, be received for certain and indubitable, and it will be easy to be seen by the writings of some that have revived it again in our days, what consequences it will lead us into. Let any one with *Polemo*, take the World; or, with the *Stoicks*, the *Æther*, or the Sun; or with *Anaximenes*, the Air to be God; and what a divinity, religion, and worship, must we needs have! Nothing can be so dangerous as principles thus taken up without questioning or examination; especially if they be such as concern morality, which influence men’s lives, and give a bias to all their actions. Who might not justly expect another kind of life in *Aristippus*, who placed happiness in bodily pleasure;

and in *Antisthenes*, who made virtue sufficient to felicity? and he who, with *Plato*, shall place beatitude in the knowledge of God, will have his thoughts raised to other contemplations than those who look not beyond this spot of earth, and those perishing things which are to be had in it. He that with *Archelaus*, shall lay it down as a principle, that right and wrong, honest and dishonest, are defined only by laws, and not by nature, will have other measures of moral rectitude and pravity than those who take it for granted that we are under obligations antecedent to all human constitutions."

We must adapt our methods of inquiry to the nature of the ideas we examine. A sagacious and methodical application of our thoughts to finding out the relations of our abstract ideas is the only way to make true general propositions. We may learn how to proceed from the Mathematicians; who from easy beginnings gradually proceed to the demonstration of truths that appear at first sight beyond human capacity. Whether their admirable method of choosing and arranging those intermediate ideas that demonstrate the equality or inequality of unapplicable quantities, may not in time be imitated and applied to other ideas, as well as those of magnitude, I will not determine: but if the method of the mathematicians were applied to those ideas which are the real as well as nominal essences of their species,

I think we might carry our thoughts much further, and introduce demonstration into Morality.

We cannot advance much in the knowledge of bodies by contemplating the relations of our ideas, for reasons that have already been given at large: we must apply our thoughts entirely to things themselves, and learn from experience what reason cannot teach; which makes me suspect that natural Philosophy is not capable of being made a science: though I deny not that a man's insight into the nature of bodies will be proportioned to his experience.

“ From whence it is obvious to conclude, that since our faculties are not fitted to penetrate into the internal fabrick and real essences of bodies, but yet plainly discover to us the being of GOD, and the knowledge of ourselves, enough to lead us into a full and clear discovery of our duty and great concernment, it will become us, as rational creatures, to employ those faculties we have, about what they are most adapted to, and follow the direction of Nature, where it seems to point us out the way. For 'tis rational to conclude, that our proper employment lies in those enquiries, and in that sort of knowledge which is most suited to our natural capacities, and carries in it our greatest interest, i. e. the condition of our eternal estate. Hence I think I may conclude, that *Morality is the proper science and business of mankind in general*, (who are both concerned and

fitted to search out their *Summum Bonum*) as several arts, conversant about several parts of nature, are the lot and private talent of particular men, for the common use of human life, and their own particular subsistence in this world. Of what consequence the discovery of one natural body and its properties may be to human life the whole great continent of America is a convincing instance; whose ignorance in useful art, and want of the greatest part of the conveniences of life, in a country that abounded with all sorts of natural plenty, I think, may be attributed to their ignorance of what was to be found in a very ordinary despicable stone, I mean the mineral of *Iron*. And whatever we think of our parts and improvements in this part of the world, where knowledge and plenty seem to vie each with other: yet to any one that will seriously reflect on it, I suppose it will appear past doubt, that were the use of Iron lost among us, we should in a few ages be unavoidably reduced to the wants and ignorance of the ancient savage Americans, whose natural endowments and provisions come no way short of those of the most flourishing and polite nations; so that he who first made known the use of that one contemptible mineral, may be truly stiled the Father of Arts, and Author of Plenty.

I would not therefore be thought to disesteem or dissuade the Study of Nature. I readily agree the



contemplation of his works gives us occasion, to admire, revere, and glorify their Author; and if rightly directed, may be of greater benefit to mankind, than the monuments of exemplary charity, that have at so great charge been raised by the founders of hospitals and alms-houses. He that first invented Printing, discovered the use of the Compass, or made publick the Virtue and right Use of *Kin Kina*, did more for the propagation of Knowledge, for the supplying and increase of useful commodities, and saved more from the grave, than those who built colleges, work-houses, and hospitals. All that I would say, is, that we should not be too forwardly possessed with the opinion or expectation of knowledge, where it is not to be had, or by ways that will not attain it: that we should not take doubtful systems for compleat sciences; nor unintelligible notions for scientificall demonstrations. In the knowledge of bodies, we must be content to glean what we can from particular experiments; since we cannot, from a discovery of their real essences, grasp at a time whole sheaves; and in bundles comprehend the nature and properties of whole species together. Where our enquiry is concerning Co-existence, or Repugnancy to coexist, which by contemplation of our ideas we cannot discover; there Experience, Observation, and natural History, must give us by our senses, and by retail, an insight into corporeal substances. The

knowledge of bodies we must get by our senses, warily employed in taking notice of their qualities and operations on one another: and what we hope to know of separate Spirits in this world, we must, I think, expect only from Revelation. He that shall consider *how little general Maxims, precarious Principles, and Hypotheses laid down at pleasure, have promoted true Knowledge*, or helped to satisfy the enquiries of rational men after real improvements; how little, I say, the setting out at that end has for many ages together advanced men's progress towards the knowledge of natural philosophy, will think we have reason to thank those, who in this latter age have taken another course, and have trod out to us, though not an easier way to learned Ignorance, yet a surer way to profitable Knowledge.

Not that we may not, to explain any *Phænomena* of Nature, make use of any probable *Hypothesis* whatsoever. *Hypotheses*, if they are well made, are at least great helps to the Memory, and often direct us to new Discoveries. But my meaning is, that we should not take up any one too hastily, (which the mind, that would always penetrate into the Causes of things, and have Principles to rest on, is very apt to do) till we have very well examined particulars, and made several experiments in that Thing which we would explain by our Hypothesis, and see whether it will agree to them all; whether our prin-

ciples will carry us quite through, and not be as inconsistent with one *Phænomenon* of Nature, as they seem to accommodate and explain another. And at least that we take care that the name of *Principles* deceive us not, nor impose on us, by making us receive that for an unquestionable Truth, which is really at best but a very doubtful Conjecture, such as are most (I had almost said all) of the *Hypotheses* in natural Philosophy."

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### CHAP. XIII.

#### SOME FARTHER CONSIDERATIONS CONCERN- ING OUR KNOWLEDGE.

OUR knowledge has a great conformity with our sight; it is neither wholly necessary, nor wholly voluntary. Were it *necessary*, all men's knowledge would be alike, and every man would know all that is knowable: were it *voluntary*, some men regard it so little that they would have almost none at all. Men that have senses cannot but receive some ideas; if they have memory, they cannot but retain some; and if they have any distinguishing faculty, they cannot but perceive the agreement or disagreement of some of them.

The application of the mind to scrutinize objects is entirely voluntary; but the Will has no power to determine the knowledge of the mind one way or other; which is done by the objects themselves, as far as they are clearly discovered. He that has the idea of an intelligent but frail and weak being, made by and depending on an eternal, omnipotent, perfectly wise and good being, will as certainly know that man is to honour, fear, and obey God, as that three, four, and seven are less than fifteen, when he considers those numbers.

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#### CHAP. XIV.

##### OF JUDGMENT.

**T**HE faculties of the understanding being intended not merely for speculation but for the conduct of life, man would be at a great loss if he had nothing to direct him but certain knowledge. The day-light of certain knowledge is limited to a few things, probably to excite a desire after a better state; and the twilight of probability only attends the greater part of our concerns, suitable to this state of mediocrity and probation; admonishing us by our liability to error to seek that way which may lead us to

a state of greater perfection : for it is highly rational to think, even were Revelation silent, that men will be rewarded according to the employment of their talents.

*Judgment* is the faculty which supplies the want of certain knowledge. The mind sometimes exercises it from necessity, and sometimes from ~~business~~, unskilfulness or haste. The exercise of the mind immediately about things is properly so called; about propositions it is commonly called ~~Assent~~ or *Dissent*; which terms I shall use as less liable to equivocation. The forming of mental propositions according to the presumed relation of our ideas is simply *Judgment* : the forming of them according to the reality of things is *right judgment*.

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## CHAP. XV.

### OF PROBABILITY.

**PROBABILITY** is the appearance of agreement or disagreement between two ideas, by the intervention of proofs, whose seeming constant connexion induces the mind to judge a proposition to be either true or false : thus, a man hearing a Mathematician affirm " the three angles of a triangle to be equal to

two right ones," assents to it, i. e. receives it for true; where the foundation of his assent is the probability of the thing, from the supposed skill and veracity of the speaker.

There being degrees herein, from certainty down to improbability, and even to the confines of impossibility; and also degrees of assent from full assurance and confidence quite down to conjecture, doubt, and distrust; I shall now (having, as I think, found out the bounds of human knowledge and certainty) consider *the several degrees and grounds of probability, and assent or faith.*

Probability is *likeliness to be true*: and the credit given to a probable proposition is called *belief, assent, or opinion.*

The grounds of probability are these two: 1st, The conformity of any thing with our own knowledge, observation and experience. 2dly, The testimony of others vouching their observation and experience.

In the testimony of others is to be considered;  
1. The number of the witnesses: 2. Their Integrity: 3. Their skill: 4. The design of the author; where it is a testimony out of a book cited: 5. The consistency of the parts and circumstances of the relation. 6. Contrary Testimonies.

We ought to examine all the grounds of probability before we come to a judgment, and reject or

receive a proposition with an assurance proportionable to the preponderancy of the arguments on one side or the other. "For example: if I myself see a man walk on the ice, it is past Probability, 'tis Knowledge: but if another tells me he saw a man in England, in the midst of a sharp winter, walk upon water hardened with cold; this has so great conformity with what is usually observed to happen, that I am disposed by the nature of the thing itself to assent to it, unless some manifest suspicion attend the relation of that matter of fact. But if the same thing be told to one born between the tropicks, who never saw nor heard of any such thing before, there the whole probability relies on Testimony: and as the relators are more in number, and of more credit, and have no interest to speak contrary to the truth, so that matter of fact is like to find more or less belief. Though to a man, whose experience has been always quite contrary, and has never heard of any thing like it, the most untainted credit of a witness will scarce be able to find belief. And as it happened to a Dutch Ambassador, who entertaining the king of Siam with the particularities of Holland, which he was inquisitive after, amongst other things told him, that the water in his country would sometimes, in cold weather, be so hard, that men walked upon it, and that it would bear an elephant, if he were there. To which the king

replied, *Hitherto I have believed the strange things you have told me, because I look upon you as a sober fair man; but now I am sure you lye.*

As the conformity of our knowledge, as the certainty of observations, as the frequency and constancy of experience, and the number and credibility of testimonies agree or disagree, so is a proposition probable or improbable.

Another argument, though a very false and dangerous one, by which men most commonly regulate their assent, is the *Opinion of others*: for there is much more falsehood and error among men than truth and knowledge. If the opinions of others, whom we know and esteem, be a ground of assent, men have reason to be Heathens in Japan, Mahometans in Turkey, &c. but of this more in another place.

## CHAP. XVI.

### OF THE DEGREES OF ASSENT.

**MEN** not being able to retain distinctly in their memories all the proofs of the probable truth of their opinions, must be content to remember that they once had reason to give such an opinion such



a degree of assent. If we will not allow men to be persuaded of several opinions, the proofs of which are not actually present to their mind, the greater part must be either very sceptical, or change their opinion every moment, in compliance with the arguments of the last antagonist. Where men have not well examined what they judged, this is a cause of frequent obstinacy in error; those that are least apt to question their own opinions being in general most pertinacious.

It carries too great an imputation of lightness and folly for men to renounce their former tenets upon the first offer of an argument which they cannot immediately answer; and therefore it becomes all men to maintain peace and the common offices of humanity and friendship in the diversity of opinions. If a man takes his opinions upon trust, and thinks them impressions received from God, or from men sent by him, how can we expect that he should give them up on the authority of an adversary, especially if there be any suspicion of interest; as there always is where men find themselves ill treated? We should do well to communicate and endeavour to remove our mutual ignorance, since no man can say that he has thoroughly examined all his own or others opinions. Even those who have fairly examined all the doctrines they profess, find so little reason to be magisterial in their opi-

nions, that nothing insolent and imperious is to be expected from them: and there is reason to think, that if men were better instructed themselves, they would be less imposing on others.

There are two sorts of probable propositions; those *concerning particular existence*, commonly called matter of fact, which are capable of human testimony; and those *concerning things beyond the discovery of our senses*, which are not capable of such testimony.

Where any particular thing, consonant to the constant observation of ourselves and others in like case, comes attested by the concurrent reports of all that mention it, we build as firmly upon it, as if it were certain knowledge. Should all Englishmen affirm that it froze in England last winter, or that swallows were seen there in summer, I think a man could almost as little doubt of it, as that seven and four are eleven.

The highest degree of probability then is the general consent of all men in all ages, as far as it can be known, concurring with a man's constant experience in like cases, to confirm the truth of a particular matter of fact attested by fair witnesses: such are all the stated constitutions and properties of bodies, and the regular proceedings of causes and effects in the ordinary course of nature. This we call an argument from the nature of things them-

selves: for what constant observation finds to be after the same manner, we reasonably conclude to be the effect of a regular cause, though unknown to us.

The next degree of probability is a particular instance of a thing, which the observation of myself and others shews to be usual, being attested by many and undoubted witnesses: thus experience shews that most men prefer their private advantage to that of the public; if all historians say that Tiberius did so, our assent rises to confidence.

Thirdly, where things indifferent in their own nature have the concurrent testimony of unsuspected witnesses, there our assent is unavoidable: as, that a bird should fly this or that way;—that there is such a city as Rome, &c.

Thus far the determinations of the judgment are easy enough: but *when testimonies contradict common experience*, and the reports of history and witnesses clash with the ordinary course of nature, or with one another, then diligence and exactness are required to form a right judgment: the probability of the thing rising and falling, according as the two foundations of credibility, *common observation in like cases*, and *particular testimonies in that individual case*, favour or contradict it.

I think it not amiss on this subject to notice a rule observed by the Law of England; viz. “that

though the attested copy of a record be good proof, yet the copy of a copy, never so well attested, will not be admitted as a proof." This is so generally considered as reasonable, that I never heard any one blame it: and this maxim seems to result from it; that any testimony, the farther it is removed from the original Truth, has the less force; so that in traditional truth each remove weakens the force of the proof. I thought it necessary to notice this, because I find that among some men opinions gain force by growing older; and propositions doubtful at first, by an inverted rule of probability, come to pass for authentic truths.

I mean not here to lessen the credit of history: which is all the light we have in many cases, and affords us convincing evidence of many useful truths. I think nothing more valuable than the records of antiquity: I wish we had more, and more uncorrupted: but truth forces me to say, that no probability can rise higher than its first original. What had no other evidence than the testimony of one witness, is only rendered weaker by the subsequent citations of others. Passion, interest, inadvertency, mistake of sense, and a thousand odd reasons, impossible to be discovered, may make one man misquote another's words or meaning. He who has examined cannot doubt what little credit quotations deserve, where originals are wanting; and conse-

quently how much less quotations of quotations can be relied on.

It now remains to consider Probability in things which do not admit of testimony: as, 1st, The existence, nature and operations of finite immaterial beings,—spirits, angels, devils, &c. or the existence of material beings which are too small or too remote for the notice of the senses; as, whether there be plants, animals, &c. in the planets. 2dly, The manner of operation in most parts of the works of nature; where we see effects without knowing their causes. We see animals generated, nourished, and moving;—iron drawn by the loadstone, &c.; but their causes and the manner of their operation we can only guess. These and the like things cannot be examined by the senses, and therefore can only appear more or less probable as they agree with truths already established: analogy is here our only help: thus, observing that the violent rubbing of two bodies produces heat, and frequently fire, we have reason to think that what we call heat and fire consists in a violent agitation of the imperceptibly minute parts of the burning matter:—observing too that the different refractions of pellucid bodies produce several colours, and the superficial parts of several bodies according to their different position, do the like, as velvet, watered silk, &c. we think it probable that the colour and shining

of bodies is nothing but the different arrangement and refraction of their minute parts.

Finding in all the parts of the creation such a gradual connexion, that it is not easy to discover the bounds of the different ranks of beings, we conjecture that things gradually ascend upwards in degrees of perfection. It is hard to say where sensible and rational begin, or where insensible and irrational end; which is the lowest species of living things, or the first of things inanimate. A wary reasoning from analogy, which is the best guide of rational experiments, and the origin of hypotheses, often leads to the discovery of useful truths.

“ Though the common experience, and the ordinary course of things, have justly a mighty influence on the minds of men, to make them give or refuse credit to any thing proposed to their belief; yet there is one case wherein the strangeness of the fact lessens not the assent to a fair Testimony given of it. *For where such supernatural events are suitable to ends aimed at by him who has the power to change the course of nature, there, under such circumstances, they may be the fitter to procure belief, by how much the more they are beyond, or contrary to ordinary observation.* This is the proper case of *miracles*, which, well attested, do not only find credit themselves, but give it also to other Truths, which need such confirmation.

Besides those we have hitherto mentioned, there is one sort of propositions that challenge the highest degree of our Assent upon bare Testimony, whether the thing proposed agree or disagree with common experience and the ordinary course of things, or no. The reason whereof is, because the Testimony is of such an one as cannot deceive, nor be deceived, and that is of God himself. This carries with it assurance beyond doubt, evidence beyond exception. This is called by a peculiar name, *Revelation*, and our assent to it, *Faith*: which as absolutely determines our minds, and as perfectly excludes all wavering, as our knowledge itself; and we may as well doubt of our own being, as we can whether any Revelation from God be true. So that *Faith* is a settled and sure principle of assent and assurance, and leaves no manner of room for doubt or hesitation. Only we must be sure that it be a divine Revelation, and that we understand it right; else we shall expose ourselves to all the extravagancy of enthusiasm, and all the error of wrong principles, if we have Faith and Assurance in what is not divine revelation. And therefore, in those cases our Assent can be rationally no higher than the evidence of its being a revelation, and that this is the meaning of the expressions it is delivered in. If the evidence of its being a Revelation, or that this is its true sense, be only on probable proofs, our assent can

each no higher than an assurance or diffidence, rising from the more or less apparent probability of the proofs. But of *Faith*, and the precedence it ought to have before other arguments of persuasion, I shall speak more hereafter, where I treat of it, as it is ordinarily placed, in contradistinction to *Reason*; though in truth, it be nothing else but *in assent founded on the highest reason.*"

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## CHAP. XVII.

### OF REASON.

THE word Reason has various significations: sometimes it means *True principles*; sometimes, *fair deductions from those principles*; and sometimes *the Cause*, particularly *the final cause*.

I use it to signify "that faculty which is supposed to distinguish man from other animals, and wherein it is evident he much surpasses them."

Reason is necessary to all our other intellectual faculties; and indeed contains two of them, Sagacity, and Illation: by the first of which it finds out, and by the second it arranges those intermediate proofs which discover the relation between two ideas. Sense and Intuition reach but a little way; the great-



est part of our knowledge depends upon Deduction: that faculty then which finds out the means, and rightly applies them, to discover certainty in knowledge, and probability in Opinion, I call *Reason*.

In Reason we may consider these four degrees: the first and highest is *to discover proofs*; the second, *to arrange them methodically*; the third, *to perceive their connexion*; and the fourth, *to draw a right conclusion*.

I doubt whether *Syllogism* be the proper instrument of this faculty; and for these reasons: Syllogism serves our Reason only in one of the fore-mentioned parts of it; that is to shew the connexion of the proofs in any one instance, and no more; but where such connexion really is, it is as easily or better perceived without it. We shall find that we reason most clearly, when we only observe the connexion of the proofs, without reducing our thoughts to any rule of syllogism: and that many men reason correctly and clearly, who know not how to make a syllogism. It is sometimes used to discover a fallacy hid in a rhetorical flourish, or cunningly wrapped up in a smooth period; and to strip an absurdity of the cover of wit and good language: but here it is only of use to those that have studied mode and figure.

If but few can make syllogisms, if but a small part of those few know that their conclusions in the allowed modes and figures are right, and if they are the

only proper instruments of Reason, and means of Knowledge,—then before Aristotle there was no one who could know any thing by reason, and since him there is not one in ten thousand that does. But God did not make men barely two-legged creatures, and leave it to Aristotle to make them rational. The understanding is not taught to reason by the rules of syllogism: it has a native faculty to perceive the coherence or incoherence of it's ideas; and can methodize them without such perplexing repetitions. I say not this to lessen Aristotle, whom I consider as one of the greatest men among the antients; whose large views, acuteness, penetration of thought and strength of judgment few have equalled; and whose invention of forms of argumentation did great service against those who were not ashamed to deny any thing.

I own that all right reasoning may be reduced to his forms of syllogism; but I do not allow that it is the only or the best way. It is plain that he himself found some forms to be conclusive, and others not so, not by the forms themselves, but by the original way of knowledge,—the visible agreement of ideas. Tell a country gentlewoman that the wind is southwest, the weather lowering, and rain threatening, she will easily understand that she should not go out thin clad in such a day, after a fever:—she clearly sees the probable connexion of these ideas, wind, clouds,

rain, wetness, cold, relapse, and danger of death, which would be quite lost to her in the artificial arrangement of mode and figure.

Illation or Inference is justly considered as the great act of the rational faculty: but the mind, very desirous to enlarge its knowledge, or very apt to favour the sentiments it has once imbibed, too often makes inferences before it perceives the connexion of those ideas that must hold the extremes together. *To infer* is, by virtue of one proposition laid down as true, to draw in another as true.—Let this proposition be laid down, “Men shall be punished in another world,” whence be inferred this “Men can determine themselves.” In this instance, what shews the reasonableness of the inference, but a view of the connexion of the intermediate ideas? viz. *Men shall be punished—God the punisher—just punishment—the punished guilty—could have done otherwise—freedom—self determination*: Here the mind seeing the connexion between the idea of *men’s punishment in the other world*, and the idea of *God punishing*, between *that* and *the justice of the punishment*, between *that* and *guilt*, between *that* and *a power to do otherwise*, between *that* and *freedom*, and between *freedom* and *self determination*, sees the connexion between *men* and *self-determination*.

Is not the connexion of the extremes more clearly seen in this natural order, than in the jumble of five

or six syllogisms? indeed it is a view of the natural order of the connecting ideas that directs the order of the syllogisms. An ingenuous searcher after Truth needs no such forms to force him to allow the inference from the visible connexion of two ideas.

Nor are syllogisms of any use to detect the fallacies of rhetorical discourses; where, the fancy being struck with lively metaphorical representations, men do not easily perceive the true ideas on which the inference depends: but they need only strip the argumentation of those superfluous ideas which seem to shew a connexion where there is none, or at least conceal the want of it. Besides this, scholastic forms are not less liable to fallacies than plainer ways of argumentation, but are rather adapted to entangle than instruct the mind: and hence those who are baffled in that way are seldom convinced, except indeed of their adversary's superior skill in disputation. After all, every one knows what best fits his own sight; if the use of these spectacles has rendered them necessary to any one, I would not forbid them; only let him not conclude all to be in the dark, who use not the same help.

Before I leave this subject I shall notice one manifest mistake in the rules of syllogism: viz. "that no syllogistical reasoning can be right and conclusive, but what has at least one general proposition in it:" as if we could not reason about particulars; when rightly considered the immediate object of all our knowledge is nothing

but particulars. We can only reason about the ideas in our minds, which are all of them particular existences; and our reasoning about other things is only as they correspond with these ideas. The utmost of our knowledge then is the perception of the agreement or disagreement of particular ideas; and universality is but accidental to it; consisting in the correspondence of those ideas with more than one particular thing.

Our reason often fails us: 1st, Where our ideas fail: 2dly, When our ideas are confused, imperfect, or obscure; 3dly, When it wants intermediate ideas for shewing the relation of others; 4thly, When it begins with false principles; 5th, When it involves itself in dubious words.

There are four sorts of arguments which men commonly use to prevail on the assent of others, or to silence their opposition. The first is, to alledge the opinions of men whose learning, eminence, or some other cause has settled their reputation in the common esteem; so that it is thought a breach of modesty to question their authority. This is called *argumentum ad verecundiam*.—The second is, to require their adversary to admit what they alledge as a proof, or assign a better. This I call *argumentum ad ignorantiam*.—The third is, to press a man with consequences drawn from his own principles or concessions: called *argumentum ad hominem*.—The

fourth is, to use proofs drawn from any of the foundations of knowledge or probability : known by the name, *argumentum ad judicium*.

This last alone brings instruction with it : for, 1st, It argues not a man's opinion to be right, that I from any other consideration than conviction will not contradict him. 2nd, It proves not another man to be in the right way, nor that I ought to take the same, that I know not a better. 3d, It follows not that another is right from his shewing me that I am wrong. I may be modest, and not oppose another man's opinion ; ignorant, and not able to produce a better ; wrong, and be convinced of my error : This may dispose me for the reception of truth, but does not help me to it : arguments, and not my modesty, ignorance, or error, must do that.

“ By what has been before said of *Reason*, we may be able to make some guess at the distinction of things, into those that are according to, above, and contrary to Reason.

1st, *According to Reason* are such propositions, whose truth we can discover, by examining and tracing those ideas we have from Sensation and Reflection ; and by natural deduction find to be true or probable. 2nd, *Above Reason* are such propositions, whose truth or probability we cannot by reason derive from those principles. 3d, *Contrary to Reason* are such propositions, as are inconsistent with,

or irreconcilable to our clear and distinct ideas. Thus, the existence of one GOD is according to Reason; the existence of more than one GOD contrary to Reason; the Resurrection of the Dead above Reason.

Farther, as *above Reason* may be taken in a double sense, viz. either as signifying above probability, or above certainty; so in that large sense also *contrary to Reason* is, I suppose, sometimes taken.

There is another use of the word *Reason*, wherein it is *opposed to Faith*; which, though it be in itself a very improper way of speaking, yet common use has so authorised it, that it would be folly either to oppose or hope to remedy it; only I think it may not be amiss to take notice, that however *Faith* be opposed to *Reason*, *Faith* is nothing but a firm assent of the mind: which if it be regulated, as is our duty, cannot be afforded to any thing, but upon good Reason, and so cannot be opposite to it.

He that believes, without having any Reason for believing, may be in love with his own Fancies; but neither seeks Truth as he ought, nor pays the obedience due to his Maker, who would have him use those discerning faculties he has given him, to keep him out of mistake and error. He that does not this to the best of his power, however he sometimes lights on Truth, is in the right but by Chance; and I know not whether the luckiness of the accident will excuse the

irregularity of his proceeding. This at least is certain, that he must be accountable for whatever mistakes he runs into; whereas he that makes use of the light and faculties GOD has given him, and seeks sincerely to discover Truth by those helps and abilities he has, may have this satisfaction in doing his duty as a rational creature, that, *though he should miss Truth, he will not miss the Reward of it*: For he governs his Assent right, and places it as he should, who in any case or matter whatsoever believes or disbelieves according as Reason directs him. He that does otherwise, transgresses against his own light, and misuses those faculties which were given him to no other end, but to search and follow the clearer evidence, and greater probability. But since *Reason* and *Faith* are by some men opposed, we will so consider them in the following chapter."

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#### CHAP. XVIII.

##### OF FAITH AND REASON, AND THEIR DISTINCT PROVINCES.

FROM what has been premised I think we may now lay down the measures and boundaries of *Faith* and *Reason*; the want of which has caused great



disputes in the world, and fruitless endeavours to convince men in matters of religion.

I find that every sect gladly use Reason as far as it will help them, and when it fails, cry out, “ *It is matter of faith, and above reason.*” I do not see how they can argue with any one, or ever convince a gainsayer who uses the same plea, without establishing strict boundaries between *faith* and *reason*.

*Reason* then, as distinguished from *Faith*, I consider to be the discovery of the certainty or probability of propositions deduced from ideas acquired by our natural faculties.—*Faith* is assent to any proposition not on the deductions of reason, but on the credit of the proposer, as coming from God in some extraordinary way of communication: which way of discovering truths to men is called *Revelation*.

No man inspired by God can by revelation communicate to others *new simple ideas*: for whatever impressions he himself may have, he cannot convey them to others by *signs*; Words being intelligible only by the custom of using them for *the signs of ideas in the mind*. Whatever new ideas St. Paul might receive in the third heavens, the only description he could make is, “ that there are such things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.”

Sounds will not convey the ideas of colours to a man who always wanted the sense of sight. For

our simple ideas then, which are the sole matter of all our knowledge, we depend wholly on our natural faculties; and can by no means receive them from traditional revelation. I say *traditional*, in distinction from *original* revelation: meaning by this, the immediate impressions of God on the mind of any man; and by that, those impressions communicated to others in words. God may reveal to us Truths which are discoverable by Reason; but in this case there is little need of Revelation; God having furnished us with natural and surer means of knowledge: for the knowledge that this Revelation came originally from God can never be so sure as the knowledge we have from the distinct perception of the agreement or disagreement of our own ideas.

Whatever we know by intuition or demonstration, nothing but an *original revelation* can make surer; and there our assurance can be no greater than our knowledge that it is a revelation from God. Nothing however under that title can ever prevail with a rational man against the clear evidence of his own understanding:—the ideas of one body and one place so clearly agree, that no proposition affirming the same body to be in two places at once (with whatever pretence to the authority of a divine revelation) could gain our assent: for the evidence that we are not deceived in ascribing it to God, and that we understand it rightly, can never be so great as

our evidence of the impossibility of the thing by Intuition.

We never can conceive that to come from God, the bountiful author of our being, which, if received for true, must overturn all the principles and foundations of knowledge, render all our faculties useless, destroy his most excellent workmanship, the human understanding, and put us in a condition of less light and conduct than the beasts.

Unless it be revealed that such a proposition or such a book was communicated by divine inspiration, to believe or disbelieve their divine authority can never be matter of *faith* but of *reason*: and Reason can never produce assent to that which to itself appears unreasonable: Revelation may confirm its dictates, but cannot invalidate its decrees.

Things *beyond the discovery of our natural faculties, and above reason* are, when clearly revealed, the proper matter of *faith*: as the rebellion and fall of the angels,—the resurrection of the dead to a state of life. When our Reason can only form probable conjectures, Revelation coming from one who cannot err, and will not deceive, ought to prevail against it.

Whatever God has revealed is certainly true; no doubt can be made of it; it ought to over-rule all our opinions, prejudices, and interests: but no evidence that any *traditional revelation* is of divine

original, in the words we receive it, and in the sense we understand it, can be so clear as that of the principles of Reason: *nothing therefore contrary to or inconsistent with them has a right to be urged or assented to as a matter of Faith wherein Reason has nothing to do.*

“ If the provinces of Faith and Reason are not kept distinct by these boundaries, there will, in matter of religion, be no room for Reason at all ; and those extravagant opinions and ceremonies, that are to be found in the several religions of the world, will not deserve to be blamed. For, to this crying up of Faith in opposition to Reason, we may, I think, in good measure, ascribe those absurdities that fill almost all the religions which possess and divide mankind. For men having been principled with an opinion, that they must not consult Reason in the things of Religion, however apparently contradictory to common sense, and the very principles of all their knowledge, have let loose their fancies and natural superstition ; and have been, by them, led into so strange opinions, and extravagant practices in religion, that a considerate man cannot but stand amazed at their follies, and judge them so far from being acceptable to the great and wise GOD, that he cannot avoid thinking them ridiculous, and offensive to a sober good man. So that, in effect, Religion, which should most distinguish us from

beasts, and ought most peculiarly to elevate us, as rational creatures, above brutes, is that wherein men often appear most irrational, and more senseless than beasts themselves. *Credo, quia impossibile est: I believe, because it is impossible*, might, in a good man, pass for a sally of zeal; but would prove a very ill rule for men to chuse their Opinions or Religion by."

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## CHAP. XIX.

### OF ENTHUSIASM.

**T**HE love of Truth ought to prepare us for the search of it: for whoever loves it not will take but little pains to get it, and feel but little concern at missing it. Every one in the commonwealth of learning professes himself a lover of Truth, and any one would be offended at not being thought so; yet, notwithstanding their own persuasions, few love Truth for Truth's sake.

A certain mark of a man's earnestly loving it, is his not entertaining any proposition with greater assurance, than the proofs it is built on will warrant. Whoever goes beyond this measure of assent loves it for some hye end; for it must be some other af-

fection than the love of Truth which can carry his assent above the evidence : but as Truth can receive no evidence from our passions or interests, so it should receive no tincture from them.

An assumed authority of dictating to others is a constant concomitant of this bias of our judgments : for how can he not be ready to impose on others' belief, who has already imposed on his own ? Will not he who does violence to his own faculties, usurp the prerogative of Truth, to command the assent of others ?

A third principle of assent, which with some has the same authority as either Faith or Reason, is Enthusiasm : which would set up Revelation without Reason, and thereby substitute for it the ungrounded fancies of a man's own brain, and assume them as a foundation for opinion and conduct.

“ Reason is *natural revelation*, whereby the eternal Father of Light and Fountain of all Knowledge communicates to mankind that portion of Truth which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties. *Revelation* is natural Reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by GOD immediately, which Reason vouches the truth of, by the testimony and proofs it gives, that they come from GOD. So that he that takes away *Reason* to make way for *Revelation*, puts out the light of both ; and does much what the same, as if he would

persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better to receive the remote light of an invisible star by a telescope.

“ *Immediate Revelation* being a much easier way for men to establish their opinions, and regulate their conduct, than the tedious and not always successful labour of strict Reasoning, it is no wonder that some have been very apt to pretend to revelation, and to persuade themselves that they are under the peculiar guidance of heaven in their actions and opinions; especially in those of them which they cannot account for by the ordinary methods of knowledge, and principles of Reason. Hence we see that in all ages, men, in whom melancholy has mixed with devotion, or whose conceit of themselves has raised them into an opinion of a greater familiarity with GOD, and nearer admittance to his favour than is afforded to others, have often flattered themselves with a persuasion of an immediate intercourse with the Deity, and frequent communications from the Divine Spirit. GOD I own cannot be denied to be able to enlighten the understanding by a ray darted into the mind immediately from the fountain of Light. This, they understand, he has promised to do; and who then has so good a title to expect it, as those who are his peculiar people, chosen by him, and depending on him?

“ Their minds being thus prepared, whatever

groundless opinion comes to settle itself strongly upon their fancies, is an illumination from the Spirit of GOD, and presently of divine authority: and whatsoever odd action they find in themselves a strong inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call or direction from heaven, and must be obeyed; it is a commission from above, and they cannot err in executing it."

Enthusiasm, though founded neither on Reason nor Revelation, but rising from the conceits of an overheated imagination, works more powerfully than both of them together; Men being most obedient to impulses received from themselves, and acting most vigorously when carried by a natural motion. The love of something extraordinary, the ease and glory of being inspired, so flatters men's laziness, ignorance and vanity, that when once got into this way of immediate revelation,—of illumination without search, and of certainty without proof and without examination—it is a hard matter to get them out of it.

The Light of the Spirit, they say, is its own proof, independent of reason: it carries its own demonstration with it: and we may as rationally take a glow-worm to assist us to discover the Sun, as examine the celestial ray by the dim candle of Reason.

Thus, these men are sure, because they are sure; and their persuasions are *right* because they are



*strong.* They say that they see by an internal light, and feel the impulses of the Spirit. But do they distinguish between these different perceptions,—of the *truth* of a proposition, and of the *revelation* of a proposition.—of an *inclination* to do something, and of the *Spirit of God moving that inclination*? I may perceive not only the Truth of a proposition, but also that my knowledge of it did not come in a natural way, without perceiving it to be a Revelation from God; for there may be spirits, which, without a divine commission, shall excite ideas in me, so that I may perceive their connexion. This *seeing*, I suppose, is at most nothing but *believing*; for where a proposition is known to be true, Revelation is needless: and it is hard to conceive a revelation to any one of what he knows already. This light that Enthusiasts are so dazzled with, is nothing but an *ignis fatuus*, that leads them round continually in this circle: “It is a revelation because they firmly believe it; and they believe it, because it is a revelation.”

Whatever any one knows to be true, he knows either by intuition or rational proofs; and it is vain to suppose that to be a revelation, which any other man may know by the same way, without the help of revelation. If he says he knows it to be true because it is a revelation from God; the reason is good: but then it will be asked, how he knows it

to be a Revelation.—The *strength* of our persuasions is no evidence of their *rectitude*: crooked things may be as stiff and inflexible as straight; and men may be as positive and peremptory in error as in truth. How else arise the untractable zealots in different and opposite parties? If ungrounded strength of assurance be evidence of a divine revelation, then contrary opinions have the same title to be inspirations. St. Paul himself believed that he did well, and that he had a call to persecute the Christians.

True light in the mind is nothing but the evidence of Truth: To talk of any other is to put ourselves in the dark, so as not to distinguish between the delusions of Satan and the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. God, when he makes the prophet, does not unmake the man: he leaves him his natural faculties to judge whether his inspirations be of divine original or not: when he illuminates the mind with supernatural light, he does not extinguish the natural. What reason finds to be revealed, it adopts as confidently as what is made out by natural principles: but it must examine the truth of persuasions by something extrinsical to themselves.

“ If this internal light, or any proposition which under that title we take for inspired, be conformable to the principles of Reason, or to the word of God, which is attested Revelation, Reason warrants it, and we may safely receive it for true, and be

guided by it in our belief and actions : If it receive no testimony nor evidence from either of these rules, we cannot take it for a Revelation, or so much as for true, till we have some other mark that it is a Revelation, besides our believing that it is so. Thus we see the holy men of old, who had Revelations from God had something else besides that internal light of assurance in their own minds, to testify to them that it was from God. They were not left to their own persuasions alone, that those persuasions were from God, but had outward signs to convince them of the author of those revelations. And when they were to convince others, they had a power given them to justify the truth of their commission from heaven ; and by visible signs to assert the divine authority of a message they were sent with. Moses saw the bush burn without being consumed, and heard a voice out of it. This was something besides finding an impulse on his mind to go to Pharaoh, that he might bring his brethren out of Egypt ; and yet he thought not this enough to authorize him to go with that message, till God by another miracle of his rod turned into a serpent, had assured him of a power to testify his mission by the same miracle repeated before them whom he was sent to. Gideon was sent by an angel to deliver Israel from the Midianites, and yet he desired a sign to convince him that this commission was from God. These,

and several the like instances to be found among the prophets of old, are enough to shew that they thought not an inward seeing or persuasion of their own minds, without any other proof, a sufficient evidence that it was from God, though the Scripture does not every where mention their demanding or having such proofs. ^

“ In what I have said, I am far from denying that God can, or doth sometimes enlighten men’s minds in the apprehending of certain truths, or excite them to good actions, by the immediate influence and assistance of his holy spirit, without any extraordinary signs accompanying it. But in such cases too we have Reason and the Scripture, unerring rules to know whether it be from God or no. Where the truth embraced is consonant to the Revelation in the written word of God, or the action conformable to the dictates of right reason, or holy writ, we may be assured that we run no risk in entertaining it as such; because though perhaps it be not an immediate revelation from God, extraordinarily operating on our minds, yet we are sure it is warranted by that Revelation which he has given us of Truth. But it is not the strength of our private persuasion within ourselves, that can warrant it to be a light or motion from heaven; nothing can do that but the written word of God without us, or that standard of Reason which is common to us with all men.

Where Reason or Scripture is express for any opinion or action, we may receive it as of divine authority; but 'tis not the strength of our own persuasions which can by itself give it that stamp. The bent of our own minds may favour it as much as we please; that may shew it to be a fondling of our own, but will by no means prove it to be an offspring of Heaven, and of Divine Original."

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## CHAP. XX.

### OF WRONG ASSENT, OR ERROR.

**E**RROR is not a fault of our knowledge, but a mistake of our judgment, giving assent to that which is not true. But if *assent* be grounded on *probability*, it will be asked, how men come to give their assent contrary to probability: for nothing is more obvious than that one man wholly discredits what another only doubts of, and what a third firmly believes.

The various reasons of this may be reduced to these four: 1st, Want of proofs. 2d, Want of ability to use them. 3d, Want of will to use them. 4th, Wrong measures of probability.

By want of proofs, I mean not only of those

which are not to be obtained, but of those which might be procured. The greatest part of mankind, enslaved to the necessity of their mean and laborious condition, have no opportunity to make experiments themselves, or to collect the testimonies of others. By the natural and unalterable state of things in this world, and the constitution of human affairs, they are unavoidably given over to invincible ignorance of those proofs which are necessary to establish most of the propositions that are judged of the greatest moment. They have much to do to get the means of living, and are not in a condition to make learned and laborious enquiries.

“ What shall we say then? are the greatest part of mankind, by the necessity of their condition, subjected to unavoidable ignorance in those things which are of greatest importance to them? (for of those 'tis obvious to enquire.) Have the bulk of mankind no other guide but accident and blind chance to conduct them to their happiness or misery? Are the current opinions, and licensed guides of every country, sufficient evidence and security to every man to venture his greatest concerns on; nay, his everlasting happiness or misery? or can those be the certain and infallible oracles and standards of Truth, which teach one thing in Christendom, and another in Turkey? or shall a poor countryman be eternally happy, for having the chance to be born in Italy; or

a day-labourer be unavoidably lost, because he had the ill luck to be born in England? How ready some men may be to say some of these things, I will not here examine; but this I am sure, that men must allow one or other of these to be true, (let them chuse which they please) or else grant, that God has furnished men with faculties sufficient to direct them in the way they should take, if they will seriously employ them that way, when their ordinary vocations allow them the leisure. No man is so wholly taken up with the attendance on the means of living, as to have no spare time at all to think of his soul, and inform himself in matters of religion. Were men as intent upon this, as they are upon things of lower concernment, there are none so enslaved to the necessities of life, who might not find many vacancies that might be husbanded to this advantage of their Knowledge.

Besides those whose improvements and informations are straitened by the narrowness of their fortunes; there are others whose largeness of fortune would plentifully enough supply books, and other requisites for clearing of doubts, and discovering of Truth; but they are cooped in close by the Laws of their countries, and the strict guards of those whose interest it is to keep them ignorant, lest, knowing more, they should believe the less in them. These are as far, nay, farther from the liberty and opportunities

of a fair enquiry than those poor and wretched labourers we before spoke of; and however they may seem high and great, are confined to narrowness of thought, and enslaved in that which should be the freest part of man, their Understanding. This is generally the case of all those who live in places where care is taken to propagate Truth without Knowledge, where men are forced, at a venture, to be of the religion of the country, and must therefore swallow down Opinions, as silly people do Empirick's pills, without knowing what they are made of, or how they will work, and have nothing to do, but believe that they will do the cure; but in this are much more miserable than they, in that they are not at liberty to refuse swallowing what perhaps they had better let alone, or to chuse the physician to whose conduct they would trust themselves."

Some cannot carry a train of consequences in their heads, nor weigh contrary proofs. There are some men of one, and some but of two syllogisms. Whether this great difference in men's intellectuals arises from any defect or from the want of use in the organs particularly adapted to thinking, or, as some think, from the natural differences of men's souls, or from both together, it matters not here to examine: but it is evident that from this difference there is a greater distance between some men and others, than between some men and brutes.



Another sort of men, with riches, leisure, and abilities enough, will not use the proofs that are offered. The hot pursuit of pleasure, an aversion to study, or the fear that an impartial enquiry would not favour those opinions which best suit their prejudices, lives, and designs, makes them content to take upon trust what they find convenient and in fashion. I cannot think how men whose ample fortunes allow them leisure to improve their understandings, can content themselves with a lazy ignorance: how men, who would think themselves miserable in coarse cloaths or a patched coat, can contentedly suffer their minds to appear abroad in a pie-bald livery of coarse patches and borrowed shreds, such as the common opinion of their associates may have cloathed them in. I will not here mention how unreasonable this is in men that ever think of their concern in a future state, which every rational man must do sometimes; nor how shameful it is in the greatest contemnners of knowledge to be ignorant of what they are concerned to know.

But this at least is worth the consideration of those who call themselves Gentlemen, that however they may think credit, respect, power and authority the concomitants of their birth and fortune, they will find all these carried away from them by men who surpass them in knowledge.

They who are blind will always be led by those

that see, or else fall into the ditch : and the greatest slavery is that of the understanding.

The fourth sort, who do not yield to manifest reasons, even where they appear, are those who have taken up wrong measures of probability : which are, —1st, Uncertain or false propositions adopted as principles. 2d, Received hypotheses. 3d, Predominant affections. 4th, Authority.

The first and firmest group of probability is the conformity any thing has to our knowledge, especially that part of it which we consider as *principles*. Their authority is so paramount, that not only the testimony of others but the evidence of our own senses is often rejected, when contrary to them. Nothing is more common than to instil into the unwary minds of children religious propositions, which from long custom and education can never be eradicated. Men finding these opinions as old as their memories, and not observing how they acquired them, are apt to reverence them as sacred ; and look on them as the Urim and Thummim set up in their minds by God himself, to be the unerring deciders of all controversies. The great obstinacy with which men hold quite contrary opinions, though often equally absurd, in the various religions of mankind, is as evident a proof as it is an unavoidable consequence of this mode of reasoning from received traditional principles.—Men will renounce the evidence of their senses

rather than admit any thing that differs from internal oracles. An intelligent Romanist, thus educated, will admit not only against all probability, but against the clear evidence of his senses, the doctrine of Transubstantiation ; and believe that to be flesh which he sees to be bread.

Next to these are men whose understandings are cast in the mould of a received hypothesis : who agree with dissenters in admitting matter of fact, but differ in assigning reasons and explaining the manner of operation. These men cannot be persuaded by probable arguments that things are not brought about just in the manner which they have decreed them.

Can any one expect that a learned professor, (whose authority is wrought out of hard Greek and Latin with no small expence of time and candle, and confirmed by general tradition and a reverend beard) should bend to an upstart Novelist, and confess that what he taught his scholars thirty years ago was all error and mistake, and that he sold them hard words and ignorance at a very dear rate ?

To this of wrong hypothesis may be reduced errors occasioned by a true hypothesis, or right principles misunderstood. The instances of men contending for different opinions, all derived from the infallible truth of scripture, are an undeniable proof of this. All Christians allow the text that says *μετανοείτε*, to carry in it the obligation to a very

weighty duty: yet how erroneous must be the practice, either of those who translate it *repentez vous* repent, or of those who follow the translation *faitiez penitence*, do penance.

Thirdly, predominant passions and appetites generally overcome the strongest probabilities. Earthly minds, like mud walls, resist the strongest batteries. Tell a man, passionately in love, that he is jilted, and bring a score of witnesses to the truth of it, 'tis ten to one but three kind words of his mistress will invalidate all their testimonies.

Though it is the nature of the understanding constantly to take the more probable side, yet we have a power to restrain its enquiries, and prohibit a full examination. There are always these two ways of evading the strongest probabilities: 1st, "There may be a fallacy latent in the words of the argument; and of many consequences some may be incoherent." Few discourses are so short, clear, and consistent, that men may not raise this doubt, and free themselves by the old reply,—*Non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris*,—though I cannot answer, I will not yield. 2dly, "More perhaps may be said on the contrary side."—Though beaten, I will not yield, because there may be forces in reserve. This refuge is so open and wide, that it is hard to determine when a man is quite out of the verge of it.

In most cases however we may, after a careful

examination, determine on which side the probability rests. Where there is reason to suspect a fallacy in words, or that certain proofs of equal weight may be produced on the contrary side, there suspense or dissent are often voluntary actions: but where neither of these cases happens, I think a man can scarce refuse his assent to the more probable argument. Whether or not it be probable that a promiscuous jumble of letters should fall into a coherent discourse, or that a fortuitous concourse of atoms should frequently constitute the bodies of any species of animals, no one, I think, can hesitate in determining. The thing being in its own nature indifferent, and depending on testimony, when there is no reason to suppose as fair testimony against as for the matter of fact (that there was 1700 years ago such a man at Rome as Julius Cæsar) I think no rational man can refuse his assent. In less clear cases I think a man may suspend his assent, and content himself with the proofs he has, if they favour the opinion that suits his interest. But that any one should afford his assent to what appears to him less probable, appears to me as impossible as to believe the same thing probable and improbable at the same time.

As Knowledge is no more arbitrary than Perception, so Assent is no more in our power than Knowledge. With my eyes open, I cannot avoid seeing

objects in day-light; where the agreement of two ideas is perceived, I must have knowledge; and where I perceive the greater probability, I must give my assent: yet I can prevent both knowledge and assent, by stopping enquiry, and not employing my faculties in the search of Truth. How else could ignorance, error, or infidelity ever be a fault? In many cases, where our assent either way is of no importance, the mind may render itself to the first comer. The foundation of Error then lies in *wrong measures of Probability*, as the foundation of Vice in *wrong measures of Good*.

“The fourth and last wrong measure of probability I shall take notice of, and which keeps in ignorance or error more people than all the other together, is that which I have mentioned in the foregoing chapter, I mean, *the giving up our Assent to the common received Opinions*, either of our friends or party, neighbourhood or country. How many men have no other ground for their tenets than the supposed honesty, or learning, or number of those of the same profession? As if honest or bookish men could not err; or truth were to be established by the vote of the multitude; yet this, with most men, serves the turn. The tenet has had the attestation of reverend antiquity; it comes to me with the passport of former ages, and therefore I am secure in the reception I give it;—other men have

been, and are of the same opinion, (for that is all is said) and therefore it is reasonable for me to embrace it. A man may more justifiably throw up Cross and Pile for his opinions, than take them up by such measures. All men are liable to error, and most men are, in many points, by passion or interest, under temptation to it. If we could but see the secret motives that influenced the men of name and learning in the world, and the leaders of parties, we should not always find, that it was the embracing of Truth for its own sake, that made them espouse the doctrines they owned and maintained. This at least is certain, there is not an opinion so absurd, which a man may not receive upon this ground. There is no error to be named, which has not had its professors; and a man shall never want crooked paths to walk in, if he thinks that he is in the right way, wherever he has the footsteps of others to follow.

But notwithstanding the great noise is made in the world about errors and opinions, I must do mankind that right as to say, *There are not so many men in errors and wrong opinions, as is commonly supposed.* Not that I think they embrace the Truth; but, indeed, because concerning those doctrines they keep such a stir about they have no thought, no opinion at all. For if any one should a little catechize the greatest part of the partizans of most

of the sects in the world, he would not find, concerning those matters they are so zealous for, that they have any opinions of their own: much less would he have reason to think, that they took them upon the examination of arguments, and appearance of probability. They are resolved to stick to a party that education or interest has engaged them in; and there, like the common soldiers of an army, shew their courage and warmth as their leaders direct, without ever examining, or so much as knowing the cause they contend for. If a man's life shews that he has no serious regard for religion; for what reason should we think, that he beats his head about the opinions of his church, and troubles himself to examine the grounds of this or that doctrine? 'Tis enough for him to obey his leaders, to have his hand and his tongue ready for the support of the common cause, and thereby approve himself to those who can give him credit, preferment, or protection in that society. Thus men become professors of, and combatants for those opinions they were never convinced of, nor proselytes to; no, nor never had so much as floating in their heads; and tho' one cannot say there are fewer improbable or erroneous opinions in the world than there are, yet this is certain, there are fewer that actually assent to them, and mistake them for Truths, than is imagined."



## CHAP. XXI.

## OF THE DIVISION OF THE SCIENCES.

“ALL that can fall within the compass of Human Understanding being either, 1st. The nature of Things, as they are in themselves, their relations, and their manner of operation :—or 2dly, That which Man himself ought to do, as a rational and voluntary agent, for the attainment of any end, especially happiness :—or 3dly, The ways and means whereby the knowledge of both the one and the other of these are attained and communicated :—I think, *Science* may be divided properly into these *three sorts*.

1st, The Knowledge of Things, as they are in their own proper Beings, their constitutions, properties and operations, whereby I mean not only *Matter* and *Body*, but *Spirits* also, which have their proper natures, constitutions, and operations, as well as Bodies. This, in a little more enlarged sense of the word, I call *φυσική*, or *natural Philosophy*. The end of this is *bare Speculative Truth*, and whatsoever can afford the mind of man any such, falls under this branch, whether it be God

himself, Angels, Spirits, Bodies, or any of their affections, as number and figure, &c.

2dly, Πραξικὴ, *The skill of right applying our own powers and actions, for the attainment of things good and useful.* The most considerable under this head, is *Ethicks*, which is the seeking out those rules and measures of human actions, which lead to happiness, and the means to practise them. The end of this is not bare speculation, and the knowledge of Truth; but Right, and a conduct suitable to it.

3dly, The third branch may be called Σημειωτικὴ, or the *Doctrine of Signs*, the most usual whereof being words, it is aptly enough termed also Λογικὴ, *Logick*; the business whereof is *to consider the nature of signs the mind makes use of for the understanding of things, or conveying its knowledge to others.* For since the things the mind contemplates are none of them, besides itself, present to the understanding, 'tis necessary that something else, as a sign or representation of the thing it considers, should be present to it; and these are *Ideas*. And because the scene of *Ideas* that makes one man's thoughts, cannot be laid open to the immediate view of another, nor laid up any where but in the memory, (a no very sure repository,) therefore, to *communicate* our thoughts to one another, as well as *record* them for our own use, Signs of our

ideas are also necessary. Those which men have found most convenient, and therefore generally make use of, are articulate sounds.

The consideration then of *Ideas and Words*, as the great instruments of knowledge, makes no despicable part of their contemplation, who would take a view of Human Knowledge in the whole extent of it. And perhaps if they were distinctly weighed, and duly considered, they would afford us another sort of Logic and Critic than what we have been hitherto acquainted with.

This seems to me *the first and most general, as well as natural division* of the objects of our understanding. For a man can employ his thoughts about nothing, but either the contemplation of things themselves, for the discovery of truth;—or about the things in his own power, which are his own actions, for the attainment of his own ends;—or the signs the mind makes use of, both in the one and the other, and the right ordering of them for its clearer information. All which three, *viz. Things* as they are in themselves knowable: *Actions* as they depend on us, in order to happiness; and the right use of *Signs* in order to knowledge, being *toto cælo* different, they seemed to me to be the three great provinces of the intellectual world, wholly separate and distinct one from another.”

## APPENDIX.

“ I SHALL not enlarge any farther on the *wrong judgments*, and neglect of what is in their power, whereby men mislead themselves. This would make a volume, and is not my business. But whatever false notions, or shameful neglect of what is in their power, may put men out of their way to happiness, and distract them, as we see, into so different courses of life, this yet is certain, that Morality, established upon its true foundations, cannot but determine the choice in any one that will but consider: and he that will not be so far a rational creature as to reflect seriously on infinite happiness and misery, must needs condemn himself, as not making that use of his understanding he should. The rewards and punishments of another life, which the Almighty has established, as the enforcements of his laws, are of weight enough to determine the choice, against whatever pleasure or pain this life can shew, when the eternal state is considered but in its bare possibility, which no body can make any doubt of. He that will allow exquisite and endless happiness to be but the possible consequence of a good life here, and the contrary state the possible reward of a

bad one, must own himself to judge very much amiss, if he does not conclude, *that a virtuous life with the certain expectation of everlasting bliss, which may come, is to be preferred to a vicious one, with the fear of that dreadful state of misery, which it is very possible may overtake the guilty; or at best, the terrible uncertain hope of annihilation.* This is evidently so, though the virtuous life here had nothing but pain, and the vicious continual pleasure: which yet is for the most part, quite otherwise, and wicked men have not much the odds to brag of, even in their present possession; nay, all things rightly considered, have, I think, even the worst part here. But when infinite Happiness is put in one scale, against infinite Misery in the other; *if the worst that comes to the pious man, if he mistakes, be the best that the wicked can attain to, if he be in the right, who can without madness run the venture?* Who in his wits would chuse to come within a possibility of infinite misery, which if he miss, there is yet nothing to be got by that hazard? Whereas on the other side, the sober man ventures nothing against infinite happiness to be got, if his expectation comes to pass. *If the good man be in the right, he is eternally happy; if he mistakes, he is not miserable, he feels nothing.* On the other side, *if the wicked be in the right, he is not happy; if he mistakes, he is infinitely miserable.* Must it not be a most ma-

nifest wrong judgment, that does not presently see, to which side in this case the preference is to be given? I have forbore to mention any thing of the Certainty or Probability of a future state, designing here to shew the *wrong judgment*, that any one must allow he makes upon his own principles, laid how he pleases, *who prefers the short pleasures of a vicious life upon any consideration, whilst he knows, and cannot but be certain, that a future life is at least possible.*"

THE END.

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